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Sunday, March 11, 2012

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Fitial: NMI illegals now over 9,000

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial said the number of illegal foreigners and so-called overstayers in the CNMI has grown from some 3,000 to over 9,000, adding that he has reiterated his request with the federal government to give him the authority to deport these people.

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Fund threatens to terminate insurance of CHC employees

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

NMI Retirement Fund administrator Richard Villagomez has issued a 15-day notice of termination in the health and life insurance coverage of employees at the Commonwealth Health Center, who are seven pay periods behind in their payment.

The Group Health and Life Insurance Program is an ancillary service being handled by the Fund administrator for the government. Aetna Global is the carrier for the health insurance, while Indi-

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HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, left, and his wife Josie Fitial, right, fill out their ballots at the Carolinian Utt in Garapan during Saturday's Republican caucus.

Romney vote puts CNMI on nat'l political map

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Mitt Romney's decision to send his son and daughter-in-law to Saipan on Friday and his sweeping victories during Saturday's caucuses thousands of miles away in the Pacific has put the CNMI on the national political map amid local

economic and immigration troubles.

Romney picked up nine delegates from the CNMI and an equal number from Guam to help inch toward the 1,144 delegates needed to win the Republican presidential nomination.

The former Massachusetts governor won an overwhelming 87 percent or 740 of the 848 votes cast on Saipan,

Tinian and Rota from 7am to 7pm on Saturday. Rick Santorum got only 6 percent or 53 votes. Ron Paul got 3 percent or 28 votes. Newt Gingrich also got 3 percent, or 27 votes.

"Now the voters of the Northern Mariana Islands—nearly 8,000 miles from Washington, D.C.—have spo-

See ROMNEY on Page 4

MHS Glee Club rocks Guam music fest

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The singing prowess of the Marianas High School Glee Club's "Rhythm 'n Harmony" was the big winner in Guam's Tumon Bay Music Festival over the weekend, with the group adjudged as the festival's overall champion and Sweepstakes Tro-

phy champion.

Also from the CNMI Public School System, the Koblerville Elementary School's Umang Club came home with the biggest of smiles after sweeping nine major awards in its division.

According Harold Easton, MHS fac-

See MHS on Page 4



MHS Rhythm N Harmony performs Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Ave Verum with musical director Paul Dujua conducting during the Command Performance and Award Ceremony held in the Kahida Hall, Guam Plaza Hotel on March 11, 2012.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Local

Power restored to public schools, healthcare corp.

» **Central govt paid \$600K for agencies, part of schools' arrears**

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Power was restored to the Public School System and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. around Friday noon after the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. received a \$400,000 payment, with assurances that their delinquent accounts will be made current. A day before, PSS made a \$3,000 payment that resulted in the restoration of power to the PSS central and Board of Education offices.

CUC deputy executive director Alan W. Fletcher said the \$400,000 payment resulted in the reconnection of the administrative offices of at least six

schools, including Marianas High School, Hopwood Junior High, and the San Vicente, Tanapag, Koblerville, and San Antonio elementary schools.

Based on CUC records, public schools owe \$4.1 million in unpaid utility bills as of Feb. 29. Since Wednesday, total payment received from PSS was \$403,000.

"CUC is pleased to announce that power will be restored to PSS and CHC starting immediately. CUC has received \$400,000 from PSS today and is coordinating with PSS staff for reconnection. Reconnecting facilities will most likely be occurring on Saturday in preparation for school on Monday," Fletcher said Friday.

He pointed out, though, that while CUC is pleased to reconnect the schools, continued service is conditioned upon future and regular utility payments and

in catching up with payments on past due amounts.

BOE chair Marylou S. Ada confirmed the transfer of \$400,000 to CUC. "I am happy that as of today CUC will reconnect all administration buildings of all six Saipan public schools after the Secretary of Finance [Larissa Larson] notified us that \$400,000 was paid to CUC," Ada said Friday.

Education officials, teachers, and parents trooped Thursday to the Legislature and pleaded for help. Acting education commissioner Glenn Muna said yesterday that he's grateful for

everyone's assistance and support. "We are truly grateful to all of our PSS staff, our students, and parents for standing alongside us. We also commend the administration, the Legislature, and CUC for working with us," he said in a statement.

Meantime, Fletcher disclosed that despite not getting any payments from the healthcare corporation, CUC decided to restore power to at least 12 accounts—all of them non-critical areas—beginning Saturday. The corporation owes CUC \$2.1 million since October 2011.

"CUC has been given assurances of payment for CHC and will be coordinating for an orderly reconnection. While no monies have been received from CHC, CNMI Department of Finance was able to generate an additional payment on the central government's account this week that provided CUC the immediate cash it needed for fuel purchases. The extra pay-

ment from CNMI, along with the understanding that CHC's line of credit was progressing, is encouraging news and CUC will be reconnecting power to CHC," said Fletcher.

Again, he emphasized that continued services will be conditioned upon timely payments in the future and CHC entering into a payment agreement for past due amounts.

Power was restored in the following offices: Substance Abuse Treatment, Division of Public Health including the Diabetes Resource Center, Bureau of Environmental Health Services, Mental Health Services, and STD/HIV program. All these offices were relocated to CHC last Wednesday.

Fletcher also disclosed that the central government paid a total of \$600,000 for owed billings: \$500,000 was paid toward the government's arrears while \$100,000 was paid toward PSS' arrears.

Two-day forum seeks retirees' views on proposed benefit cuts

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Superior Court associate judge Kenneth L. Govendo has set a two-day forum on March 13 and 14 for all parties involved in the long standing lawsuit between the central government and the NMI Retirement Fund.

In a two-page invitation sent to the Fund board of trustees, Govendo indicated that he organized the forum after learning the frustration of the Fund to get members of the government and interested parties together to work toward finding solutions to the pension program's crisis. Govendo said the forum is for parties to come together to "voice their concerns, ideas, and recommendations." The forum is scheduled at 9am on both days at his courtroom, Room 205A.

Govendo cited the recent testimony of the Fund's actuarial consultant, Dylan Porter, who said that the Fund will only last until July 2014 if the government employer contributions remain at just \$13 million a year and pension payments remain the same.

Fund legal counsel Viola Alepuyo told the Fund board that Govendo aims to get specific answers and recommendations, specifically from retirees, on two questions: 1) Should the court be the one to make the cuts in members' benefits? and 2) If the court should be the one to make the decision, how much is the cut to be made?

According to Alepuyo, Govendo called for the forum because he does not feel comfortable making the decision

for the retirees.

Because the Fund board of trustees has no legal authority to cut members' benefits, the board has asked the court to order some form of restructuring in pension payments until the Fund is sustainable enough to pay the full benefits.

According to Alepuyo, Govendo wants the presence of old and present members of the board of trustees, including Sixto K. Igisomar, whose term expired last Thursday. Igisomar said he will attend. Also invited are Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos as well as CRA officials and members.

Igisomar emphasized at the Thursday board meeting that, although the Fund will not take a position on the proposal to cut members' benefits, the agency's consultant, Buck Consultant, presented various scenarios and options that may help the court and retirees determine the percentage of cuts that may be enforced.

Both Buck and the Fund's investment consultant, Wilshire Associates, earlier disclosed that without new monies coming in to the portfolio and with the same amount of payouts and contributions, the Fund's lifespan will last less than three years. Cutting benefits and increasing contributions were identified as key to prolonging the life of the pension plan.

Based on the unaudited records of the Fund, the agency received \$13.1 million in employer contributions in fiscal year 2011 while \$61 million was paid out as benefit payments.

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Heinz: I'm not running for delegate to US Congress

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Former speaker Heinz S. Hofsneider said he is not running for CNMI nonvoting delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives in November, quelling speculations that he will be challenging incumbent Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan (Ind-MP).

Sablan is so far the only one who has formally announced his candidacy in the Nov. 6 polls.

Hofsneider, who ran against Gov. Benigno R. Fitial in the last gubernatorial election, was among those at the luncheon hosted by Fitial on Friday for Matt Romney and wife Laurie. Matt is the second oldest son of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney.

"I've been approached about the rumor. The rumor is totally false. I'm not interested in politics. I'm not even running in this midterm election," Hofsneider said.

Fitial, chairman of the Republican Party of the NMI Association, said in a separate interview that while there have been Re-

publican names considered for the delegate post, the party has yet to make a final decision.

Hofsneider said he is focused on helping the NMI Retirement Fund not go broke, but was quick to point out that he's not a consultant for the Fund.

"I'm not a consultant of anybody but to the speaker of the House," he said, referring to Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan).

The NMI Retirement Fund was reportedly planning to hire Hofsneider as consultant for the pension agency for \$70,000 a year. That didn't sit well with some retirees and government officials.

Among them is former lieutenant governor and speaker Diego Benavente, now a Commonwealth Retirees Association director, who said the Fund should not be a place for "political consultants" like

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Hofsneider.

But Hofsneider said "some of the politicians today that are creating all these commotions and difficulties are responsible for the mess."

"They should put aside their politics and come up with a solution so that we can work

together and resolve some of our most critical problems," he said.

Hofsneider said people do not realize the consequences of having the Fund go broke. "We have two years remaining for the Retirement Fund and if we don't find a way to

save [it], it's not only the 4,000 retirees and dependents that are worried about their livelihood," he added.

Hofsneider said the CNMI does not have the capacity to borrow money now to help the Fund, including some lawmakers' proposal for a pension obli-

gation bond to pave the way for a \$300 million to \$400 million borrowing.

"We don't have the means. No creditor or lender out there is going to look at us and allow us to borrow at least \$300 million to \$400 million to save the [Fund]. To borrow that amount of money, we're looking at \$10 million to \$15 million per year of debt payment," he said.

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MHS**From Page 1**

ulty adviser and National Forensic League chairman who traveled with the group to Guam, this year marked the MHS Glee Club's first participation. He said its "Rhythm 'n Harmony" was the gold medalist in the choral competition category for high school, besting other contenders who were mostly from Guam. The group competed on Friday and was invited to the festival's command performance Saturday night where gold medal awardees rendered repeat performances for special audiences.

The 13-member champion group included Nikki Canape, Mariel Ferrier, Rosemarie Liangco, Kaitlyn Conner, Kelly Demapan, Mary Grace Barro, Gemmilie Anne Eugenio, Jenella Nelmida, Matthew Lopez, Mark Gonzales, Darren Cajipo, Rolando Sangalang, and Patrick Llaban. They were guided by musical director Paul Dujua of Friends of the Arts, MHS choral group director Ruthie Fruit, and Easton.

The CNMI's Saipan Southern High School Manta Ray Band bagged the Sweepstakes Trophy in 2011 while

FUND**From Page 1**

vidual Assurance Co. handles the life insurance coverage of GHLIP members.

Villagomez, in a two-page letter dated March 6, informed affected hospital employees of the failure of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. to remit the premiums of members. He gave these employees 15 days upon receipt of the letter to update their accounts or coverage will be stopped.

"Despite GHLIP sending a letter to your employer on Feb. 24, 2012 demanding payment of the insurance premiums within ten days, the premiums have not been received," states Villagomez's letter.

"You must pay to the GHLIP Trust Fund 100 percent of your premiums [employer and employee share] for the past seven pay periods to bring your account current and additionally pay 100

the second overall award went to the Umang Club. This year, the Manta Band skipped the festival to prepare for their performance at the London Olympics in August.

Easton described the Sweepstakes Trophy as a very important recognition for the MHS Glee Club and could become the group's stepping stone to future big performances. After the Manta Band's historic success in Tumon Bay events, the group joined the New York International Music Festival and performed at the prestigious Carnegie Hall in New York. Their next step is the London Olympics.

"We're very, very pleased because our members did so well. It's very important to be able to score well in a competition where the expectations of excellence are so high. Like the Manta Band, this may be a stepping stone for us," Easton told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Matthew Lopez, a member of the champion group, described the recognition as a "great experience." He said all the hard work paid off. The group only had one month to prepare.

The MHS Glee Club was formed in November 2010. In June last year, it competed in the 2011 Thespian Festival at the University of Lincoln-

percent of your premiums for the next pay period to keep your coverage in place," adds the demand letter.

He pointed out until such time that the corporation begins to remit their premiums, these affected employees "must pay 100 percent of your premiums to GHLIP Trust within five days of each pay date so that the Trust may remit the premiums on to the carriers and keep your insurance in effect."

Even if members bring their accounts current but then miss two subsequent pay dates, GHLIP will still terminate their coverage without further notice, Villagomez said.

"GHLIP regrets that this procedure has become necessary, but GHLIP Trust has insufficient funds available to continue your coverage without payment and further delinquencies by the CHC employees could place all other government employees' coverage at risk," he added.

Corporation chief executive officer Juan N. Babauta confirmed receiving

ing candidate for delegate and I was so pleased to hear that each one of them was supporting Mitt Romney as well. Governor Romney understands the important role the CNMI plays in the Pacific Region and is committed to helping us improve our economy the right way. I was so pleased to talk with Mitt Romney [on Friday] and it was clear from that conversation he will not forget us here in the CNMI," Fitial said.

Fitial and his wife Josie cast their vote at 8:55am at the Carolinian Utt in Garapan. The couple stayed for hours at the site of the caucus and delegate election.

Isabel K. Davis, of Dandan, was among those who voted early in Garapan on Saturday.

"I voted for Romney. I think he's the best, and I hope he becomes president," she said, adding that her son was at the governor's residence when Fitial hosted a luncheon for Romney's son Matt and wife Laurie.

Major news organizations were abuzz with news from both the CNMI and Guam before and after the caucuses.

"I personally spoke to every lead-

Nebraska.

'Beautiful pieces of music'

According to musical director Paul Dujua, the group started its repertoire with *Seasons of Love*, a song from the Broadway play *Rent*.

"I arranged the song in a way that it begins simple, and then slowly builds up on the harmonies as the song progresses," he said.

The group also rendered a Latin sacred piece written and arranged by Anton Bruckner for a cappella, titled *Locus Iste*. The third and fourth songs were taken from the Broadway musicals *Les Misérables* and *Aida* titled *One Day More* and *Dance of the Robe*. Dujua described both pieces as very powerful, moving and challenging songs that feature several soloists. Dujua said the choreography to these two songs impressed festival judges.

"As one of the judges, Mr. Mack Brandon, mentioned, he commends the Glee for pulling off a choreographed dance routine while delivering powerful solos and choruses. The judges were also impressed with the group's theatrical ability to deliver believable and convincing characters. Their number was also noted as being the least compared to the other groups that

the demand letter from GHLIP. He said the corporation's finance department is currently looking at ways on how to meet the unpaid obligation.

"If we are able to come out with enough funding to pay for those immediately, we will do so this week. But still, it depends on the availability of funds," Babauta said yesterday.

Meantime, the corporation was able to release all paychecks of its about 600 personnel last Friday after generating the amount it needed to meet payroll, Babauta said.

The corporation has to come up with \$800,000 each pay period for its personnel's salaries. It was reported Wednesday last week that the organization was still short of \$200,000 to meet the full payroll.

"We were able to pay the payroll [last Friday] because we barely generated enough for payroll alone...but for housing allowance and other allotments, we're still far behind to cover all our expenses," he said.

send the candidate's son and daughter-in-law marked the first time in CNMI history that a presidential campaign sent a representative to set foot on the islands.

Fitial said the Santorum and Gingrich campaign teams sent him emails last year but nothing came out of those communications.

The CNMI could also expect further reaching out from the Republican Party as well as from President Barack Obama's Democratic Party campaign ahead of the Nov. 6 presidential elections, residents said during the weekend.

'Results'

Kodep Ogunmoro-Uludong, overall coordinator for the 2012 Republican caucus in the CNMI, read the results of the caucus at past 8pm on Saturday at the Carolinian Utt before party members, volunteers, and the media.

Of the 848 votes cast, 425 were on Saipan, 305 were on Rota, and 118 on Tinian.

Viola Alepuyo, Republican national committeewoman, said while the results for the presidential votes were

ranged from 30 to 50 people, yet they sounded far more than twice their actual size," said Dujua.

3 gold awards, 6 silver medals

Koblerville Elementary School principal Rizalina Purunganan told *Saipan Tribune* that its Umang Glee Club won nine major awards in the following categories: gold medal for command performance for choir competition; gold medal for solo performance; gold medal and command performance for small ensemble; one silver medal for small ensemble; two silver medals for jazz, rock, and beyond; and three silver medals for solo performance. All of the school's entries placed gold and silver in the competition.

FITAL**From Page 1**

"I told them that if you cannot deport overstayers, give me the authority to do so because I am very good in deporting overstayers," he said in an interview on Saturday.

The governor, who returned last week from a three-week trip to Washington, D.C. and California, said the over 9,000 illegal aliens and overstayers include those involved in the underground economy, are illegally employed, or jobless and therefore not paying taxes and not contributing to the economy.

He also considers as illegal or overstayers those who could not find an employer to petition them for a Commonwealth-only worker or CW status, and ended up applying for parole with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

"I don't understand what humanitarian parole is. My humanitarian issue here is my people who are not working because we have an underground economy going on because of too many legal overstayers," he added. "Everybody who is not contributing to the community should not be here. In other words, get out. I cannot be more clear than that."

Fitial said he has brought the issue of the need to deport these people and this time the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is "very receptive" and is now working with the CNMI.

"Out of many entries from private and public schools in Guam and [the] CNMI, we are fortunate to be chosen to be included in the command performance held at The Plaza Hotel on March 10. It is truly a great experience for the students and an honor to be chosen as one of the best performers at Tumon Bay Music Festival," said Purunganan.

Only five schools were chosen for the command performances: Koblerville Elementary School, Harvest Christian Academy, L.P. Untalan Middle School, St. John Middle School, and Marianas High School.

Karen Alla, director and adviser of the Umang Glee Club, said the students are really talented and were motivated to win.

"We need to remove all these overstayers because they are not contributing to this community," he said, adding that when the Department of Homeland Security found out that the CNMI government was planning to sue over the one-year parole that USCIS has been starting to grant, "they requested that we talk. So talk is continuing."

Rene Reyes, founding president of the Marianas Advocates for Humanitarian Affairs Ltd., said yesterday that only immigration courts can determine who is legal and illegal in the CNMI.

Reyes said those who applied for parole with USCIS should not be considered illegal "because they are going through a legal process" that is available to them.

Moreover, he said USCIS has not even granted decisions on most of these parole applications.

"It's not the fault of these people that their applications have not been decided yet. I believe USCIS is prioritizing the processing of CW applications but will soon be moving on to parole applications. In fact, they have started issuing parole expiring on Dec. 31, 2012," he added.

The leader of the workers' group also said the fact that foreigners are applying for parole shows that they still want to contribute to the local economy. Most people granted parole could apply for an authorization for employment document so that they could legally work in the CNMI.

most prominent businessmen in the CNMI, said at 75, this will be his first time to attend a Republican National Convention and is looking forward to it. He reiterated that he will vote for Romney at the convention.

"And I would like to share this experience of attending a national convention with my wife Cecilia," Lifoifoi said after casting his vote with his wife by his side.

Blanco, also among the elected delegates to the convention, said, "Romney deserves our vote."

"He sent his son out here to know who we are, what we are all about, and what our concerns are. We're very touched by the gesture. He has the qualifications and characters I admire. He's a good manager, he became successful by his hard work and skills," Blanco said.

Herman Sablan, who was elected an alternate delegate, said there's a "very good chance to have a Republican president once again."

Rep. Joseph Palacios (R-Saipan) said he also voted for Romney, owing to the candidate's son's personal stories about his father's character and values.

Mafnas: We're making progress in Romero slay case

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Department of Public Safety Commissioner Ramon C. Mafnas said Friday that they are "making progress" in their investigation into the killing of bartender Emerita "Emie" Romero.

In a news briefing, Mafnas

Woman pleads guilty to mail fraud charges

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A woman indicted in federal court on charges of stealing \$27,000 in professional services fees and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services filing fees paid by alien workers pleaded guilty on Friday.

Maria Nina Dolot Castro pleaded guilty to three counts of mail fraud as part of a plea deal. She was represented by court-appointed counsel Steven Pixley.

As part of the deal, the U.S. government will drop the remaining charges of five counts of mail fraud, four counts of altering a postal money order, and four counts of passing an altered postal money order.

\$48M moved from CDARS to Fund's custodian

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A total of \$48 million has been moved from the certificate of deposit account registry service to the Bank of Hawaii, the NMI Retirement Fund's custodian, according to the pension agency's administrator, Richard Villagomez.

During Thursday's board meeting, Villagomez said that \$59 million remain with CDARS but this will soon be transferred as they mature.

The Fund placed a total of \$107.9 million in the CDARS program following the departure of the Fund's investment consultant in October in the wake of the passage of the Beneficiaries Derivative Act, which has since been repealed. The Fund is not allowed to make any investment decision without the advice of an expert.

Investment consultant Wilshire

said they are waiting for the forensic analysis and examinations of evidence from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's laboratory in Virginia.

Mafnas said the results of the FBI examinations "will more or less seal" the Romero case. He refused to elaborate.

The commissioner also disclosed that he requested the FBI

to conduct a cell site analysis. He refused to elaborate, saying he does not want to jeopardize the investigation.

According to digital investigations experts, cell site analysis is a tool in criminal investigations in which a mobile phone's call data records are used to trace the historic geographical movement of the phone as it

Castro will be sentenced on June 14, 2012 at 9am. U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona vacated the jury trial scheduled for March 19, 2012.

According to the indictment filed in January, Castro, through her scheme of stealing clients' payments for professional services and USCIS filing fees, defrauded clients and her employers of about \$27,000.

Castro worked as an administrative assistant, first with the Law Office of Danilo T. Aguilar, then with BDC Consultancy, LLC, a Saipan-based visa processing company. In both jobs, she personally collected payments from clients for professional services and application filing fees.

The Office of the Attorney General also filed a criminal case charging Castro with theft by deception and theft, for the same case. The OAG, however, subsequently dropped the charges after the indictment was filed in federal court.

Consulting Associates, which returned to the Fund after the Act's repeal, advised the board on Feb. 25 to stop all transactions with CDARS and immediately transfer the money to its custodian.

Besides CDARS, the Fund also has assets invested in Vanguard short-term bonds, which was also ordered liquidated and moved to the custodian. This amounts to \$68.6 million as of Feb. 17.

The Fund had \$253.3 million in its portfolio as of last month.

"We have \$59 million still to be transferred back to our custodian and we're continuing the process as the [accounts] mature," said Villagomez, adding that more cash will be moved to the custodian until everything is transferred.

He said the transferred cash accounts will be managed by Richmond and Blackrock, the money managers hired by the Fund to handle its portfolio. Another money manager, PIMCO, is expected to be processed soon.

moves from place to place.

Last Feb. 24, Mafnas disclosed that DPS and the FBI are investigating a "person of interest."

Romero was last seen alive boarding a green or blue tinted

'Police got excellent tips in Garapan rape case'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Public Safety Commissioner Ramon C. Mafnas disclosed that investigators continue to receive "excellent tips" relating to the rape case in Garapan.

"We are working on that. So as much as we'd like to issue information, we want to keep this process respectable," said Mafnas in a news briefing on Friday at the Department of Corrections' conference room.

Following criminal justice process, he said they intend to control the release of information rather than make a mistake and lose some of the evidence.

"The golden rule here is that

sedan around 3am on Feb. 5 near her residence in Garapan.

FBI agents found her body two days later during a search in the northernmost building of the former La Fiesta Mall in San Roque.

The cash reward, including the Crime Stoppers \$1,000, has now reached \$22,000, for any information leading to an arrest in this case.

The suspect reportedly beat up and raped the victim, described as a 25-year-old Asian, inside her bedroom in western Garapan on the morning of Jan. 29.

The suspect also tried to take the victim with him to his car at knifepoint, but she managed to escape by yelling for help.

The suspect was described as in his late teens to early 20's, brown complexioned, very short hair, about 5'5" to 5'8" tall, and weighing 150 to 170 lbs.

The victim sustained some injuries.

Police said the suspect fled the scene in an older model yellowish gold Hyundai Accent four-door sedan.

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- Saturday March 17th 9:00am - 1:00pm
at Marianas Medical Center in Garapan

All interested patients should call Marianas Medical Clinic for scheduling

234-3925/7

Insurance accepted: AETNA and Medicaid



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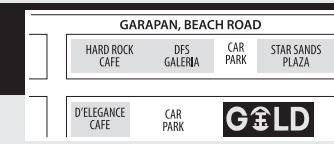
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'Popular initiative only option after Senate killed casino bill'

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate's decision to kill another bill legalizing casino gaming on Saipan is prompting pro-casino government officials to turn to popular initiative and have the question of casino gaming placed in the Nov. 6 ballot.

Allowing Saipan voters to decide on the issue instead of legalizing it through legislation

has been what most senators have been asking for to begin with, said Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian), that's why they voted "no" twice in two years on Saipan casino bills.

House Ways and Means Committee chair Ray Basa (Cov-Saipan) said he is not giving up on legalizing casino operations because it is a major revenue-generating industry to help revive the economy, restore 80 work hours

biweekly, and pay other government obligations.

"If no one's going to do it, I will do it. There are lots of people out there who are now willing to vote for casino on Saipan," he told *Saipan Tribune*. He said he could initiate the popular initiative as early as this week.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial expressed disappointment with the Senate's decision to reject once again a Saipan casino

bill, and is now also looking at popular initiative. "Casino is the solution that we are all hoping for to help revive the CNMI economy," he said.

He reiterated that casino operations will bring in fresh money into the islands. "The only alternative that is left for the Saipan casino would be a popular initiative that has to be placed on the ballot in November," he said.

Basa said he's appalled that the Senate would reject such a major revenue-generating bill without proposing an alternative source of revenue instead of proposing further cost-cutting or improve the system of collecting taxes and fees.

The Senate rejected the casino gaming bill Wednesday night by a vote of 6-2. Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (R-Saipan) and Sen. Luis Crisostimo (Ind-Saipan) strongly argued the bill's passage but they were outvoted by those who opposed it. Sen. Ralph Torres (R-Saipan) was absent.

"The Senate had voted down a very important piece of legislation not only for Saipan, but also for Tinian and Rota. It just blew my mind. I cannot fathom what is the reason why they didn't support that legislation. The question now in my mind, if they voted it down, what other alternatives do we have? The ones they are proposing are just minute, they cannot infuse money that we need and that casinos would produce or generate," Basa added.

Former Public Works secretary Juan Reyes, who also supports casinos on Saipan, said he's glad that Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) brought up the issue of properly

enforcing tax and fee collections to help improve cash flow.

"I really am glad the Senate president said that. The government should start with Tinian Dynasty, which owes the government some \$30 million in taxes and other fees," Reyes said, adding that he is "disappointed" with the Senate's rejection of the Saipan casino bill.

Back in January, former Senate president Juan Demapan said while it is too early to begin the actual signature drive, developing the idea and planning for a popular initiative should now begin because of the considerable amount of time, effort, money, and other resources needed to ensure it's placed on the ballot.

Rep. Froilan Tenorio (Cov-Saipan), author of the House casino bill that the Senate shot down in 2010, said it would not be hard to gather enough signatures to put the question of Saipan casino on the ballot. The hard part would be to ensure that it gets enough votes on Nov. 6, he added.

At least 20 percent of persons qualified to vote on Saipan need to sign the petition drive.

It then has to be approved by two-thirds of Saipan voters who cast their votes. The last Saipan casino popular initiative was rejected by Saipan voters in 2007.

Garapan Annex RFP to be re-issued

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Superior Court deputy clerk 3 Theodora San Nicolas Decena poses with associate judge Joseph N. Camacho on Thursday. Decena retired on Friday after spending 20 years in court and one year with the Public School System.



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

On Thursday, the local courts handed her a plaque of appreciation for her "outstanding public services" during a luncheon at a hotel.

Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho said he had known Mrs. Decena for many years.

"I will miss her. I know her as a capable, hardworking. And the court will really miss her not being here," Camacho said. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

The Northern Marianas Housing Corp. will reissue its request for proposal for the Garapan Annex property.

Housing board members voted unanimously on Friday for the re-issuance of the RFP "to follow the relevant statutes" as advised by their legal counsel.

Only board member Diego

Songao from Rota was unable to attend Friday's meeting.

The corporation issued in December the RFP for the Garapan Annex, a 45-unit property built on a 40,000 square-meter lot across the Commonwealth Health Center and near a supermarket, school, and restaurants.

The board cancelled the RFP at its Feb. 23 meeting, citing legal issues.

After Friday's meeting, board chair Marcie Tomokane said that two companies have expressed interest in the RFP but only one, Triple J Enterprises, completed the RFP requirements.

Triple J representatives led by founder Bob Jones were also at the meeting. Jones recommended to the board not to set a minimum or maximum bid for the Garapan Annex and instead have prospective bidders "go as much as they want to."

Saipan Tribune learned that the corporation is eyeing \$8 million for the property. Tomokane explained that the amount was calculated based on the most recent sale appraisal in the Garapan area and not on an actual appraisal.

"If we issue the new RFP, we are going to do a new appraisal as part of the statute," added Tomokane.

Triple J's Michael Sablan also recommended that the new RFP take into account the roadways and ponding basin as part of government property, to which Tomokane responded that it will be considered "as long as we don't deny access to private landowners."

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-12-009

SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF WATER DIVISION ANNUAL MATERIALS

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Supply and Delivery of Water Division Annual Materials for Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Bid Package may be obtained, upon receipt of a non-refundable payment from the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one set; at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

CUC may award a contract to more than one firm for the materials based on bids for "Commodity Groups".

One (1) original and Five (5) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-IFB-12-009, Supply & Delivery of Water Division Annual Materials**", to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **April 4, 2012 at 10:00 AM, (ChST)** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract.

The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods.

Bidders will also be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions with regards to CUC-RFP-12-009 must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on **March 19, 2012** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Joel Hoepner, CUC Water/Wastewater Division Engineer via email joel.hoepner@cucgov.org and Janina Muna, CUC Procurement & Supply Administrative Assistant via email mika.muna@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

ABE UTU MALAE
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@picom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER (ATCT) PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-001-12

AMENDED REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting sealed proposals for Preventive Maintenance of the Air Traffic Control Tower at the Saipan International Airport on the Island of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The scope of work entails providing monthly maintenance services for the Tower, the Base Building and its surroundings. The proposal package which includes the scope of work, evaluation factors, and draft agreement will be available at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, 2nd Floor of the Arrival Building beginning Tuesday, March 6, 2012. Proposers must submit all required documents listed in the scope of work. All responses to this RFP shall also take into account any and all costs that will be charged to the proposer awarded the contract for the project. Proposers shall also take into consideration all necessary badging requirements and fees for this project.

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Proposal for the Preventive Maintenance of the Air Traffic Control Tower at the Saipan International Airport". One original and two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than 4:30 P.M. LOCAL TIME, **MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2012**, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport.

All proposals will be evaluated based on the following factors: (1) price, (2) company experience, (3) insurance requirements, (4) schedule of operation, (5) sufficiency of workers, and (6) financial capability.

Contractor will be required to obtain insurance policies based on CPA's requirements. Copies of the insurance requirements may be obtained with the scope of work at the office of the Executive Director.

A pre-proposal meeting will be held at the CPA Conference Room, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport at 2:00 p.m., Thursday, March 22, 2012 to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project which will be followed with a walk through of the facility. Questions must be in writing and faxed to the Executive Director at (670) 234-5962 or via email at cpa.admin@picom.com at least seven (7) days prior to the pre-proposal conference.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Request for Proposals; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding proposal rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

CPA assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of offeror's preparation of the proposal or supply under the contract. This RFP does not commit CPA to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services.

Offerors will be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CPA Procurement Regulations.

All proposals shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. Proposals received after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ EDWARD M. DELEON GUERRERO
Executive Director

03/07/2012
Date:

Council retains draft measures for fishing in marine monuments

TUMON BAY, Guam—The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council voted Thursday last week in Guam to maintain its initial recommendations regarding traditional fishing in the Marianas Trench, Rose Atoll and Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monuments. The National Marine Fisheries Service had asked the Council to consider revising its initial recommendations to include a) limits on cash reimbursements under

customary exchange practices, b) bag limits for allowed fishing activities, and c) a definitional timeframe for traditional indigenous fishing.

Regulatory recommendations made by the Council are transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval and then implemented by Fisheries Service.

The council stated that limiting cash reimbursements under customary exchange could change fishermen's be-

havior and could be difficult to enforce as was the case for similar limits under federal Alaska subsistence halibut regulations. The council also noted that the anticipated level of non-commercial fishing in the monuments would not jeopardize the sustainability of fish stocks and that existing recommendations requiring permits and logbook reporting for all non-commercial fishing activities in the monuments would allow NMFS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the council to closely monitor the amount of fishing and harvests. These permit and monitoring mechanisms would also ensure that customary exchange does not result in commercial fishing as well

as provide a factual basis to modify the management measures in the future if they are warranted.

The council recommended that the monument fishing statistics be reviewed annually and that fishing vessels be prohibited from conducting commercial fishing outside the monument(s) and non-commercial fishing in the monument(s) on the same trip. The council also pointed out that the presidential proclamations that created the monuments do not limit traditional indigenous fishing to a particular time-frame and that to do so would be inappropriate and culturally insensitive and represent a poor understanding of cultural change and continuity

in the U.S. Pacific Islands.

The council also addressed increased military activity in the Mariana archipelago that is negatively impacting fishing communities. The fishing community would like the U.S. Department of Defense to mitigate these impacts through direct compensation, support for fishery infrastructure development, and access to fishing grounds.

The council encouraged the military to conduct a public forum and engage the local communities to determine amicable solutions. The council also supported better coordination between the government agencies and the military to enhance fisheries data collection at places such as Apra Harbor

and Anderson Air force Base.

Regarding protected species, the council agreed to request that NMFS ask the court to extend the deadline for making a proposed determination for 82 species of coral being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The delay would allow a greater opportunity for consultation with territorial governments, the council, and potentially affected fishermen and communities.

The council also supported Delegate Eni Faleomavaega's request to have the Congressional Research Service review NOAA's proposal to expand Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary in American Samoa. (WESPAC)

FIX A LEAK WEEK

Americans urged to save water

WASHINGTON, D.C.—American households waste more than 1 trillion gallons of water each year due to leaky pipes, toilets, showerheads and other fixtures, but fixing leaks can be easy and inexpensive.

During the 4th annual Fix a Leak Week, March 12-18, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense program is educating Americans about the importance of fixing leaks around the home, which will save water and nearly 10 percent on utility bills.

WaterSense's 2011

ON THE NET
Finding and fixing leaks:
<http://www.epa.gov/watersense/fixaleak>

WaterSense: <http://www.epa.gov/watersense>

Manufacturer Partner of the Year Delta Faucet Company, in partnership with EPA, GreenPlumbers USA, United Way, Ronald McDonald House, and various local water utilities and governments, will fix leaks in more than 1,000 low-income households and community facilities. Delta will fix leaky toilets and faucets, and install WaterSense-labeled showerheads in each location, and estimates that these actions will save millions of gallons of water this year alone.

"Across the country, household leaks add up to more than 1 trillion gallons of water annually. The amount we're losing could supply Los Angeles, Chicago and Miami for a full year," said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "We're

as check, twist and replace:

Check for leaks. Toilet leaks can be found by putting a few drops of food coloring into the tank and seeing if color appears in the bowl before you flush. Don't forget to also check irrigation systems and spigots.

Twist and tighten pipe connections.

To save even

more water without a noticeable difference in flow, twist on a WaterSense labeled faucet aerator or showerhead.

Replace the fixture if necessary. Look for the WaterSense label when replacing plumbing fixtures, which are independently certified to use 20 percent less water and perform as well as or better than standard models. (EPA)

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Air Force, Navy training on Farallon de Medinilla

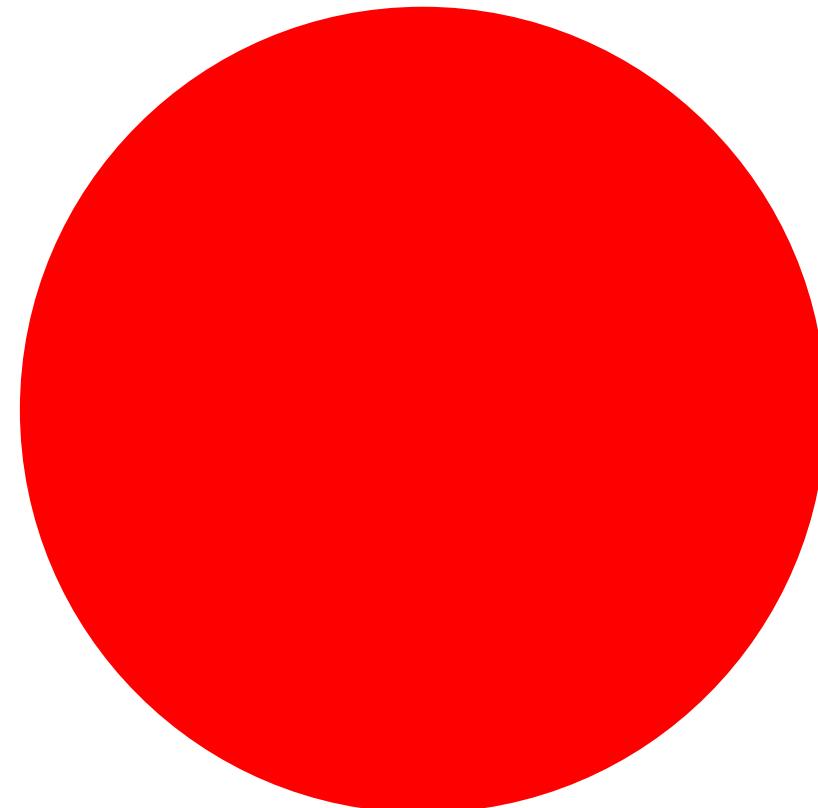
SANTA RITA, Guam—The U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy will conduct training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on March 12-16 from 7am to 10:45pm. The general public, especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators, are advised to stay clear from the area during the times and dates indicated.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla training area will be on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. (USN)

General farmers meeting

This is to inform all farmers that the Department of Lands and Natural Resources will be hosting a general farmers meeting for election of new administrators for the Saipan and Northern Islands Soil and Water Conservation District. The term of office for the new administrators is from fiscal year 2012 to 2015. The meeting will be held at the Kagman Division of Agriculture station on Wednesday, March 14, 2012, from 10am to 11:30am. For more information or any concerns, call 256-3319 and ask for Diana Gabaldon. (PR)

On March 11, 2011
Japan was devastated by the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.



**ONE YEAR LATER:
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 Tan Holdings

Navy cancels 2 Guam realignment contracts

PEARL HARBOR—Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific announced yesterday the cancellation of the Mamizu Multiple Award Construction Contract and the Apra Harbor Medical Clinic solicitations funded by the Government of Japan in support of the Guam military realignment.

The Mamizu contract for Japan-funded projects for sites

in Guam was set to expire March 20. The contract included two seed projects: Waterfront Headquarters Operations Building and Finegayan Utilities and Site Improvements – Phase 2. A standalone solicitation Apra Harbor Medical Clinic, Naval Base Guam was set to expire July 3.

The Department of Navy cancelled these solicitations

in response to restrictions included in the fiscal year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act, which prohibits the Navy from obligating funds provided by the Government of Japan until certain conditions are met. Further, the U.S. and Japan have begun to discuss potential adjustments to the Realignment Roadmap agreement.

"The Navy values its partnership with Guam, Japan, and industry and appreciates their continued support of the Guam military realignment," said Joseph Ludovici, director of the Joint Guam Program Office. "We will continue to evaluate the requirements for and timing of these projects so that we responsibly spend Japanese funds." (USN)

PDM Promoters cleanup yields 1K lbs of trash



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Some 27 volunteers of PDM Promoters Inc. pose for a group photo before the start of their monthly cleanup last March 10.

Non-profit organization PDM Promoters, Inc. held its monthly cleanup in Garapan last Saturday, taking out over a thousand pounds of trash.

Thirteen PDM volunteers employed at Kinpachi Restaurant and 14 members of the Saipan Awaodori Team took part in the cleanup, which focused on sweeping the bushes and dried leaves along Beach Road from the fire station to DFS.

The group also took out trash along the drainage from Winchell's to Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.

Saturday's cleanup hauled a total of 1,080 lbs of trash.

PDM Promoters Inc.'s Sonia Siwa said the group replaced all the trash bags in the trash bins

along Paseo de Marianas with new ones, adding to the volume of the trash they collected.

"While the Street Market organizers replaced those trash bins last Thursday night for the

street market, they were all filled up again immediately. It is very unfortunate that businesses here consider these bins as something where they can dispose their garbage," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

Siwa thanked IT&E for providing trash bags, Dickerson & Quinn for the refreshments of volunteers, and the Division of Environmental Quality for their support. (Clarissa V. David)

Writing life: Now is the time

Do you have a movie script of your own, playing in your head? Or perhaps you want to create your own manga or graphic novel? Or maybe you want to write a play for performance by your friends, or students, or on Broadway? There is no better time to write your script than in April! Join thousands around the world in Script Frenzy.

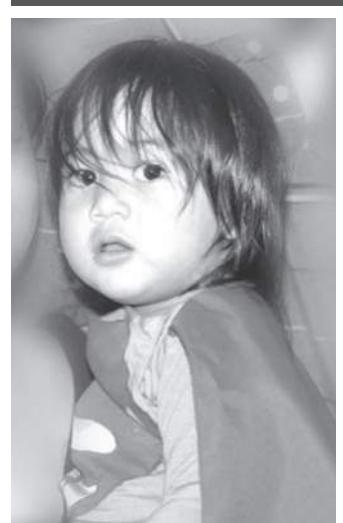


The goal is to write a 100-page script for television, movie, stage, radio, or graphic novelization, and to complete the project in 30 days.

Deadlines make things happen. And the crazy idea that you can complete your work in just 30 days is backed up by the statistics from the past five years of Script Frenzy fun.

So don't delay. Join Script Frenzy online at scriptfrenzy.org. Download free script-writing software at Celtx. And find others here on Saipan who are in the Frenzy! The story is in your hands. (PR)

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy first birthday to Tiana Therese Babauta Norita! May the Lord continue to guide and protect you! We wish you many more healthy, happy, and blessed years to come! We love you! Greetings come from Nina Sheila, Nino John, and family.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy 4th birthday to our lovely daughter, Julianne Claire Bella! We love you so much! Greetings come from Mama, Papa, and baby Julia.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy birthday greetings go out to Lilibeth Carag, who is celebrating her special day today, March 12, 2012. You are a special gift from heaven and I thank God for having you as my sister. Wishing you happiness and all the very best on your special day and every single day of your life. God bless! With much love and prayers from Ate Lois, Kuya Deo, Andee, and Gabriel.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Mar. 12, 1999

Pay unsettles PSS teachers

The June 18 pay deadline of the Public School System continues to raise concerns from teachers who are counting to receive a total of 26 pay periods in a year. According to teacher representative David Borja, rumors are circulating in schools about the payless payday after June 18 this year during the Board of Education meeting yesterday. Based on the school calendar approved by the Board of Education, teacher will work for a total of 190 days and will receive compensation according to academic background and work experience for 26 pay periods. "Teachers at various school locations are being informed that they will not be paid beyond June 18, 1999. What does this mean?" he asked the Board.

CNMI to raise flights woes at APIL gab

Local lawmakers were expected to voice out grievances against the reduction of direct air service to Saipan and urge other international carriers to bring in more tourists to the island during a two-day conference on regional transportation which began on Guam yesterday. Rep. David M. Apatang, chair of the House committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications, said the meeting organized by the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures would discuss problems facing the region in terms of air service. "We want to get some ideas as to what we can do to attract airlines to the Micronesian region," he said in an interview before departing for Guam, along with other members of the CNMI Legislature.

Mar. 12, 2001

CPA pledges to help block entry of drugs

The Commonwealth Ports Authority disclosed plans to work closely with the Division of Customs to bar entry of illegal drugs particularly ice amid reports of CNMI being used by drug syndicates as transit point. Executive Director Carlos H. Salas said efforts have been stepped up to determine ways that would facilitate arrest of the entry of illegal drugs into the Northern Marianas. Although drug detection and confiscation operations are handled by Customs Division, CPA said it will join hands with the agency to map out an effective plan against entry of prohibited substances into the islands.

Senate OKs measure to bring OPM back to CSC

The Senate unanimously voted to repeal Sections 214 and 509 of Executive Order 94-3 bringing the Office of Personal Management under the scope of the Civil Service Commission. According to the legislature, the repeals were necessary in order to bring back and reestablish a non-partisan and independent civil service system as required by Article XX of the Commonwealth Constitution. Thus, the laws affected by Sections 214 and 509 of Executive Order 94-3, were thereby reenacted and restored. Employees of the two government agencies need not fret, however, as their integration would not result in any displacements.

Mar. 12, 2002

Rota mayor seeks aid of US officials on airport project

Rota Mayor Benjamin T. Manglona urged federal officials to extend necessary assistance for the rapid completion of the Rota airport improvement project, which is seen to alleviate the economic situation of the island. Citing economic growth and a potential contributing partner of the Commonwealth, Manglona provided US Rep. Mike Scanlon and US Department of Transportation Airports District Officer Daniel S. Matsumoto a draft copy of the Rota International Airport Runway Extension analysis. Without the airport extension project, he said Rota would forever be dependent on subsidy from the government and would aggravate the financial burden of the CNMI economy.

CPA, OPM to discuss fate of several employees

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has sought the assistance of the Office of Personnel Management to resolve issues involving several ports employees who are employed and performing unrelated positions. CPA Executive Director Carlos H. Salas asked OPM Acting Personnel Officer Mathilde A. Rosario to provide them personnel rules and regulations with regard to treatment of employees who no longer perform their approved role as originally assigned. Salas said several ports employees, particularly those who were hired as controllers for the Saipan Air Traffic Control Tower, are employed under different positions but performing another tasks.

Hundreds of kites take to the sky in Saturday's festival

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The expansive ball field at the American Memorial Park was transformed into an amusement park on Saturday with hundreds flying their kites for the Marianas Winds Kite Festival and Cultural Food Fair.

The event, presented by Brilliant Star School, drew amateur and regular kite makers and fliers who took over the clear blue skies at the park with kites of various shapes and sizes for the chance to win trophies, IT&E goodies, and bragging rights.

Ramil Eustaquio of Garapan

won the Highest Flying Kite award for his homemade kite built out of old newspaper and thread seen soaring high above Hyatt Regency Saipan.

"We're happy about our victory," said Eustaquio, who was accompanied by his 9-year-old son Gian Carlo. "I will tell my friends about this," said the excited youngster.

Christian Dela Cruz, 5, won the Largest Kite for his crocodile kite, which he bought from National Office Supply about five years ago.

"He was very happy and excited about this event that he woke up at 5am," Christian's

father, Darnel, told *Saipan Tribune*. "This kite festival is also a good exercise since it keeps you running to fly the kite. It's also an opportunity to meet other people."

Sisters Talia and Maryn Trianni bagged the Most Beautiful prize under the Purchased category for their dragon-shaped kite. The 11-year-old Talia said, "It's my uncle from Texas who sent the kite to us. I've been coming to the festival ever since and I plan to join the contest again next year."

Cid Mostales won in the Most Original and Smallest category for his 1"x1" kite made of plas-



PHOTOS BY CLARISSA V. DAVID

Maryn and Talia Trianni smile for the camera with their winning kite. The Trianni's won the Most Beautiful - Purchased Kite.

tic bag and credit card as the kite frame. He has been winning the award for three years in a row.

"We've been coming here as a family because it's a good opportunity to spend time with them and have fun at the same time," said Mostales, who was joined by daughter Ciuss and son Curtis. All three flew small homemade kites.

Other proud victors included Sebastian Bernardo for Most Whimsical—Purchased and Highest Flying—Purchased/Handmade categories; Anika Mafnas for the Most Beautiful—

Handmade category for her kite made of newspapers; and Tim Brasuell for the Longest Tail—Purchased/Handmade category for his 40-foot kite tail.

Judges for the kite contests were school principal Richard Sikkel, Mei Demapan, and George Poquiz.

Saturday's event wasn't just about kites as there were also booths for face painting, games, and refreshments. A raffle draw gave away great prizes that included Kate Spade and Coach handbags and a brand new Motorola phone.

Sikkel said he was pleased with the great turnout. "At one point, the field was pretty full of people flying their kites. We're eternally grateful to everyone who supported our event."

The event's sponsors were the American Memorial Park, Marianas Visitors Authority, Café at the Park, Super Fresh Market, Shenanigans, Shirley's, Tan Holdings, Saipan Grand, IT&E, PIC, Elliott Systems, DFS, Big Dipper, Topnotch, Micronesian Brokers, D&Q, Mike Busby, Yoga Waves, school parents, and other volunteers.



Three-year-old Jasmine Deleon Guerrero gets a face painting at the festival.



Sebastian Bernardo wins the Most Whimsical award under Purchased Kites.



Ramil Eustaquio, left, and his son Gian Carlo receive their highest flying kite award from Brilliant Star School principal Richard Sikkel.



Christian Dela Cruz, 5, is this year's winner for Largest Kite - Purchased.



From left, Ciuss, Cid, and Curtis Mostales pose for a souvenir photo as they each hold a small kite. The Mostales family has won the smallest kite award for three consecutive years.



Anika Mafnas, second left, is joined by family and friends after receiving the prize for the Most Beautiful - Homemade Kite.



Tim Brasuell, center, is the Longest Tail Kite awardee for his purchased kite with a tail that measured 40 ft.

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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Sarah Palin, ready, or not, for prime time

By MICHAEL SMERCONISH

The Philadelphia Inquirer



Michael Smerconish writes for The Philadelphia Inquirer. Readers may contact him via www.smerconish.com.

When authors Mark Halperin and John Heilemann published "Game Change" in 2010, they proved that, despite an unprecedented level of coverage of the 2008 presidential campaign, there was much of the story remaining to be told.

At the time, Halperin told me this was because "people aren't going to cooperate at the level we had during the campaign, when too much was at stake." Instead, he said, "the key was to talk to sources immediately after the nomination fight and immediately when the election was over." And for having done so in more than 300 lengthy interviews with more than 200 people, Halperin and Heilemann were richly rewarded.

The authors reported that:

- Hillary Rodham Clinton might have run in 2004 had daughter Chelsea not talked her out of it.
- By 2006, Sens. Harry Reid and Chuck Schumer were encouraging Barack Obama to run against Clinton in 2008.
- Bill Clinton once irritated Ted Kennedy by suggesting that Obama would have been fetching them coffee in the not-too-distant past, which Kennedy interpreted as racial.
- Reid saw appeal in Obama, whom he described as a "light-skinned" African-American "with no Negro dialect, unless he wanted to have one."
- A rift developed between Obama and Joe Biden after the vice-presidential candidate claimed he was more qualified to be president.
- Michael Steele studied extensively to play Obama in McCain debate prep, only to have McCain decide to drop the idea for fear it would be perceived as racially insensitive.

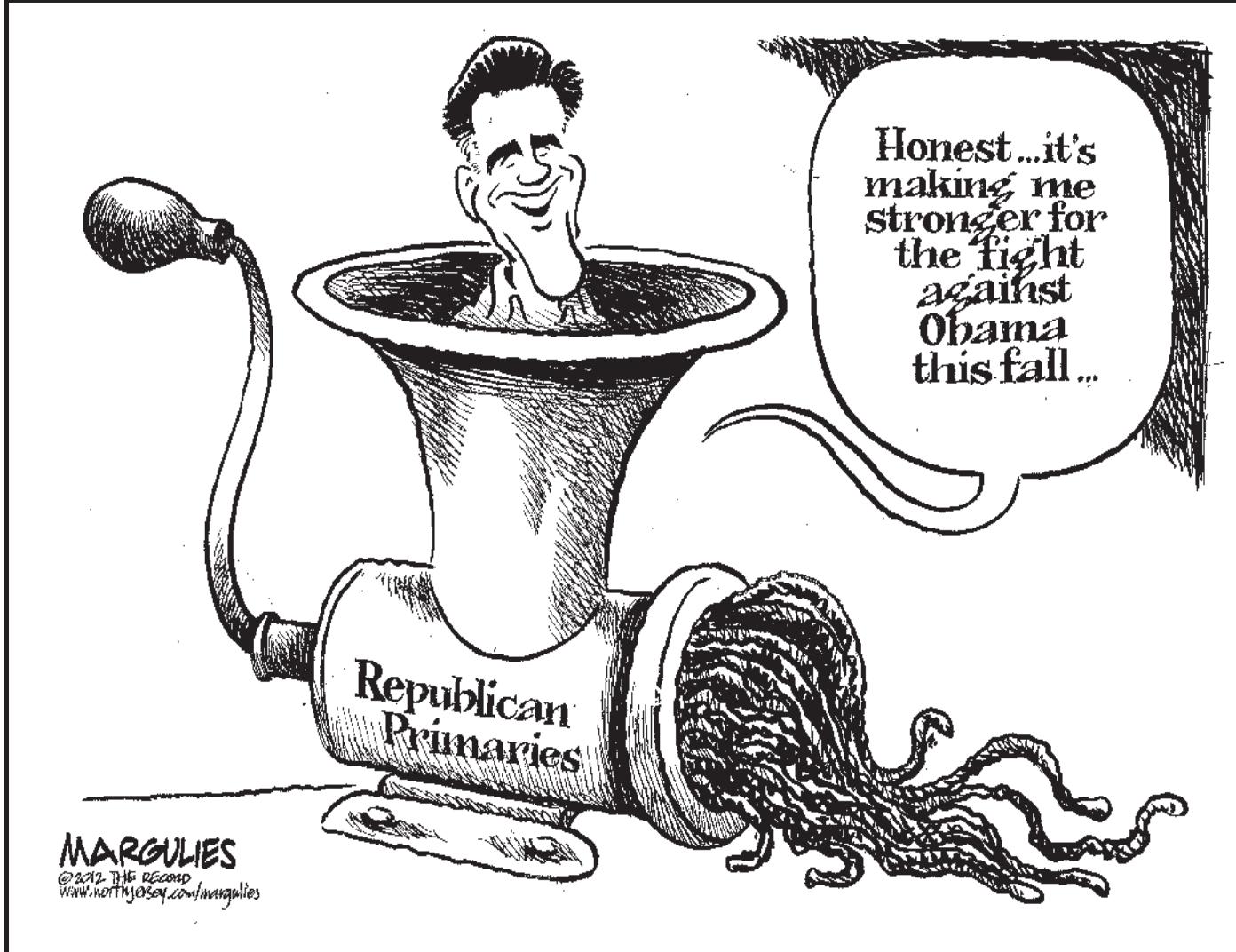
"Game Change" also contains a four-page recounting of a private conversation between Hillary Clinton and senior strategist Mark Penn, which provides a rare glimpse of her thought process. But perhaps the most explosive tidbits concerned John and Elizabeth Edwards (derided by staff as "St. Elizabeth and the Ego Monster").

John Edwards was so reckless and brazen that, on the night he lost the Iowa caucus to Obama, he made an overture to the Obama campaign to be the VP, overlooking that his paramour was then pregnant and his wife had cancer. So distressed were members of Edwards' staff that they debated whether to drop the dime to the New York Times or the Washington Post. Elizabeth Edwards was seen by staff as abusive and condescending, once protesting: "Why ... do you think I'd want to go sit outside a Wal-Mart and hand out leaflets?"

No wonder Halperin told me that "anonymity is required to do a book like this. ... To get the kind of cooperation we got requires giving people trust and confidence that they can speak freely."

With so much to choose from, the question became, how would HBO condense "Game Change's" 464 pages into two hours? Having seen an advance of the movie, which debuts Saturday night, I can answer in one word: Palin. More specifically, Sarah Palin (uncannily portrayed by Julianne Moore) as viewed through the eyes of Steve Schmidt, McCain's senior campaign strategist (Woody Harrelson).

See SARAH on Next Page



Why aren't we being hired?

"Wanted: Literate employees for immediate employment. Needed immediately."

Daily we see ads in the newspaper for help wanted, but when we go for an interview we are often rejected. Let's think for a minute why this happens. Many private businesses are willing to hire resident workers and are willing to pay a decent salary above the minimum wage if the employee is capable of performing the required duties. But alas, too often the potential employee brings a minimum level of literacy and motivation to the workplace. Thus the employer is unable to hire and train him.

On-the-job training and literacy training are not the same. If I, an employee, can read, write, speak, and compute at an expected literacy level, I can easily and quickly be trained to master various job skills. However, if I have a low literacy level, it is almost impossible to use me in a responsible capacity. Should I be hired, I will be relegated to the most menial tasks because I am unfit for a job requiring mental astuteness.

Surveys have revealed that a third of adults over 25 have less than a 12th grade education. Every school year dropout rates border between 20 to 25 percent. Seventy-five percent of unemployed adults have reading or writing difficulties. Over 60 percent of front-line workers in the service industry have difficulty applying information from a text to a required task. Could this also be the reason we have so many people on food stamps? But whose fault is it that so many are barely educated?

If anybody is to blame it is the individual involved. We, the individuals, must wake up and start putting our lives in order instead of becoming wards of the state. We may be street-smart but when we are asked to stand up to speak, read, or write, panic sets in.

There are many opportunities to improve ourselves if we have the desire. There are free online courses to improve reading and writing skills. The Northern Marianas Trade Institute is constantly encouraging anyone looking to train himself or herself to come in and see what is offered. The only requirement is the desire and will to improve. After that jobs will be available.

Here is a program that perhaps should be considered. When an employer hires an employee who tests low in reading, writing and

Work is love made visible.
And if you cannot work with
love but only with distaste, it
is better that you should leave your
work and sit at the gate of the
temple and take alms from
those who work with joy.

—Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*

Please don't cry that the minimum wage is too low. Skilled workers can command better wages.

Consider some of the jobs we could do but are not. How many air-conditioning local employees do we have? Where are the carpenters, plumbers, electricians, motorcycle repair technicians, computer graphic artists, professional landscapers, PC repair, interior decorators, child care managers, shop owners, beauty shop operators, small boat mechanics, diesel and small gasoline engine engine mechanics? The list is almost endless. Why aren't we studying them? Once trained we can command our own prices.

There is a dire need for practical nurses to care for the elderly.



By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is a former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

speaking ability, the employee should be mandated to go to an evening school to improve his "literacy handicap." He should be required to attend mandatory courses as offered by the Adult Basic Education Center. Should the employee who is mandated to join a class to improve his literacy stop going to classes, he should be warned and then fired if he still refuses. We should not feel sorry or guilty for individuals who refuse to help themselves when help is readily available. Where there is a will there is a way! Our country needs trained citizens.

When we are trained or have skills, our salary will be much higher than someone without a skill. It's not just the difference in the amount of money received but the thrill of being respected and the fun of working in a job we like. The higher and better our education, the higher and better our salary and more enjoyable job!

The CNM needs many trained technicians, semi-professional, and skilled employees. Yet when businesses seek them, it cannot find them. As a result it resorts to hiring nonresident workers.

Please don't cry that the minimum wage is too low. Skilled workers can command better wages.

Consider some of the jobs we could do but are not. How many air-conditioning local employees do we have? Where are the carpenters, plumbers, electricians, motorcycle repair technicians, computer graphic artists, professional landscapers, PC repair, interior decorators, child care managers, shop owners, beauty shop operators, small boat mechanics, diesel and small gasoline engine engine mechanics? The list is almost endless. Why aren't we studying them? Once trained we can command our own prices.

There is a dire need for practical nurses to care for the elderly.

See HIRED on Page 13

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

3.11.11**By JAIME VERGARA**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime R. Vergara (jvergarajr2031@aol.com) previously taught at San Vicente Elementary School on Saipan and is currently a guest lecturer at Shenyang Aerospace University in China.



For those whose lives experienced a shaking of the foundations by the events now associated with the numerical metaphor 9/11, the nation of Japan, in various degrees of intense challenge and trappings of despair, have 3/11 as their own symbol of the literal terrestrial tremor and immense inundation that visited the northeastern shores of the island of Honshu. The earth-shaking occurrence that made "Miyaki" and "Fukushima" household terms has come to a year's turn, testifying to the awe and wonder of human resilience that continues to see a people bear their suffering sans rancor, and proceed with the many miracles of disciplined resolve without much taint of arrogance nor conceit.

Volunteers dive the cold waters of the North Pacific in order to locate those still missing so that bodies, if still recoverable, or, at least identifiable, be given to relatives to relieve battered minds and console forsaken souls; they scour the ocean floor on this anniversary day to give the culture's vaunted communal effort one more try. The symbolic power of the attempt after all, carries a stronger punch on the human spirit than whatever tangible accomplishment it may gain.

Various degrees and forms of 9/11s and 3/11s have come to

shake the corporate and individual foundations of our lives of late. A whole economy like that of Greece teeters on the brink of wholesale collapse even as those who hold the purse strings in staid buildings of France, Germany, and the Benelux readjust the numbers in their books to see if the financial processes at play can proceed. The Greeks see a decade-long belt-tightening before they can see the light at the end of a long tunnel. Others in the Eurozone cower in fear that their banking systems are next in line.

The drumbeats of war are getting stronger as gringo machismo reflexively wants to lash at those it perceives to threaten its comfort zone stated as aggression. Syria's backyard is reportedly stained with the blood of kin in civil discord, while Cairo's youth and Gaza's refugees wrap their fists around many stones. Israel brags about keeping the option to go "unilateral" and those opposing Obama's diplomatic efforts are easy on the language of preemptive offense.

The implications of the Japan disasters on the reality of climate change, the sudden hyperactivity of the tectonic plates and air/ocean currents showing unusual patterns, along with the continuing specter of the nuclear card going rogue or awry, matters than can no longer just be ignored and are in fact still resolvable with our current state of knowledge, are laid on the tables of our rational considerations, and we tremble at the prospects of head of states going postal (with apologies to the USPS) on narrow and less than global context.

As our sense of the global challenges grows more acute, the alarming turn of our individual destinies into the dark shadows of fear and suspicion on one hand, and the hellish reality of corruption and violence on the other, has brought the realities of 9/11 and 3/11s to roost at the doorsteps of our homes, if not into the inner sanctums of where we lay our head to sleep in the night. That, or our media's choice of reporting the news is too heavily

leaning on the side of human depravity. And ignoring the reality of our situation has sent us all flying to the momentary comfort of many forms of La-la-land, failing to see that at the root of the malaise of our time lies the crisis of nothing less than the cowering shrinkage of the human spirit itself.

Lest one thinks I have gone soft on the head, I am not referring to some element here foreign to the common eye, or only the province we officially parcel to the parson and the priest, the rabbi and the imam, the guru and the shaman. I am pointing to that wonderful discovery of consciousness that is the gift of our century and generation, the capacity to transcend our moment while at the same time, being totally and immanently immersed in every aspect of it. Then, while standing on the comprehensive with the longest view for a context, be minutely sensitive to every vibration of every moment and every square inch in the arena of living engagement, we know that where the shadows of death abound, the drive for life abounds much more.

Or, at least, that objectively remains an option for each of us, for while we constantly rehearse the perceived causes that brought us to where we are, often accompanied by a blame game on our reflections of CNMI's past, and anticipate with much foreboding and doom fare the chances that lie on our path beyond, it is the choices that we make each day that constitutes the final stroke determining the course of our existence.

Nippongos, for all the gory and glory of their past, manage to keep their chin up in a deep sense of self-respect and self-confidence, and by many accounts turn calamities into a limbering of futuric resolves, and while many a year later today still reside in makeshift shelters overlooking the empty spaces left behind by their devastated homes, life flows on like *udon* on a bowl of seaweed-flavored and jasmine-scented *soba*, as the Land of the Rising Sun continues to greet a harried world, *Ohayoo Gozaimasu!*

So, how are we faring with our choices today?

Ineppen solamismu**By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.



I kuestion gi un' fina' kantan Chamoru, "Mañgge I Chamoru?" Dispues, ha mente hafa man-mabidan niha i natibun iya Guahan antes. Gaige ayu na ekspressiasion taduñg gi korason i tumege' i kanta. I ineppe gi katkuet kuestion ni finañagu nu i mismu kanta gaige solamismu gi sensian yan anten Chamoru. Gaige guennau i sagradu yan dinanche na ineppe.

Maila ta atan gi kadada' na manera haf' bidan Espanol ni Chamoru iya Guam. Motmut pahinan leblon estoria pot 'nai ha bende Espana iya Guam, isla yan tautau, guatu gi otru nasion. I kuestion: Hafa na dese tiempu tatnai ta huñgog Guam ha faisen iya Espana na u fan gagau dispensu pot i sumen tailaye na bidaña kontra natibun iya Guam?

Este na pinetsige 'nai siña baihu konfotme na huñgan guaha met-gut yan satton na diniseha ginen siha prumutehe i dignun Chamoru yan tradision natibu. Lau mientras taya' offisiat na ginagau dispension ginen Espana, pues buente ti man-listu i mañeluta rumikohe tate dignun natibun Guahan. Debi este na patte gi kuestion Mañgge I Chamoru u tutuhongue' ginen este na asuntu.

Iya Hawaii fuetsau hana' ma-adoptu un' resulasion gina-

gau dispensu ginen i Congresson Estados Unidos De America pot i destrosiu 'nai ha funas i gobietnamenton natibun iya Hawaii pot interes militat. Kontodu modun gobietnamienton natibun iya Hawaii madestrosia guihe na estrakada. Ke lau dese ñgai'an Amerika gai direchu humule'guan i Hawaiians ni modun linala' niha? Na ti pot este na esta pagu ni unu gi man-mapunu' guihe na gera ti man-deskakansa anten niha? Lau hoñgeyu' na man-gagau i Congresson Estados Unidos dispensu. I dignu tautau mina' tatautau i tautau, taya mas ke este.

Yangin guaha sinsiuyu na diniseha mareskatan i dignun natibun Guahan, pues debi u tutuhongue' gi fuetsau na ginagau dispensu ginen Espana para i natibun iya Guahan. Estague' 'nai gaige i tutuhon kabales na diniseha ma-areglia hafa tetehnan gi tradision lina'la' natibu gi bisinuta gi sanlichan.

Destrosiun Iya Fukushima

Nigap na ha'ane i primet kompliaños deste ke dinistrosia Fukushima giya Japon ni dañku na linau yan hinalom tasi (tsunami).

Mit pot mit man-pininu' nu este dos ira. Deste hagas guma yan modun linala' peska yan fangual' an pot hinerasion gi hagas lugat todou man-dinistrosia.

I linau hana' fan o' pup ya ha chalapun kulan granun unai kanti dan guma', man-loka' siha na facilidat offisina, chalan, elektrisida yan setbisuun hanom.

Todu ayu na ira ha luñu' linala' tautau ya sage pagu man-arikohe para umalimienda tate i i hagas lugat niha. Dispasiu, lau lokue' tuñgu'un i Japones ditetminasioña umareglia tate modun linala' tautauña taimanu dispues de geran dos. Magahet na kontodu industrian turista guine linuñu' sin ditension.

■ ■ ■

I asuntu ni megai besis ha pañgun mina'ñauhu i taduñg tasi (ring o fire) ni gaige gi oriyen iya Marianas taimanu Japon. Taduñg tasi ni

a "catatonic" state. A panicked Schmidt is shown calling McCain and advising that she "could be on the verge of a complete nervous breakdown." (Halperin told me this week that Schmidt's message was conveyed to McCain in a group call that caused Palin to leave Philadelphia, where she was doing debate prep, for Arizona with her family.)

The job of preparing Palin for her media interaction fell to Nicolle Wallace, a senior McCain adviser who had been the White House communications director for George W. Bush. After interviews with Charlie Gibson and Katie Couric went poorly, Moore's Palin implodes, telling Wallace, "You have ruined me." At the end of the campaign, HBO has Wallace confiding to Schmidt that she could not bring herself to vote, presumably because she had gotten too close of a look at Palin, who would have been a 72-year-old's heartbeat away from the Oval Office. (This week,

rumidonduye tano'ta. Guaha na lugat esta siete miyas tinadoñga.

I ligas paderon gi papa' tasi ni mapga' poduñg halom gi fina' tadtuñg ni chumoneg un' fuetsudu na kurenta yan linau i yumamag Fukushima'. Haf' ya masusede este gi hayan iya Marianas 'nai malofan i "ring of fire?" Guaha mohon chansata man-safu yangin ha chineneñ ennau na ira mas ke trenta pe hulu', kiñfentos miyas na fuetsa gi tatteña?

Huñgan tatnai ta susede hinalom tasi, lau mampos esta megai man-metgot na linau ta lie' guine siha gi alacha. Guaha mohon dañku na linau mamamaila'? Man-preparau hit para 'an u fattu ennau na ira? Mauleg ta atan yan preparaye para 'an ha danche hit iran dañku na linau.

■ ■ ■

Ha bira siha tatte i los probes gi hagas lugat niha. I hagas pro-ssidat familia pot hinerasion man-maliñgu 'nai yinilug ni napu ya man-chinalapun kulan añglu' na hagun troñku katkuet mane-ra. Megai man-matai familia. I man-safu sige makonsidera kau para u ta'lon humatsa tate i hagas bisnis familia 'sino u diñgu hagas lugat niha para otru siuda. Memegaiña mañaga pot ayu na lugat 'nai machuda' masahalom mañainan niha deste siglu. Un' dañku na respetu para i man-hanau, nuebu na esperansa gi korason niha para u ta'lon humatsa i muna' fan la'la' siha bisnis familia.

■ ■ ■

I Japones hagas malulug fumana' sumen chatsaga siha na pi-nadese. Ha tutuhongue' este 'nai mahatsa tatte tanu' niha ginen destrosiun geran dos. Ni unu sumeha muna' aplacha' kanaiña gi nuebu na tinituhon. Pot essu na ti apmam, tumachu tatte Japon ya sumegundu gi mas dañku yan atbansau na ekonomia gi entalo' nacion siha. Mesñgun gi halom mattiru ya siempre un' dia u na'lutta i hagas lugat niha giya Fukushima. Fehman na tinayuyot para i mañeluta gi todou animon niha umareglia ha'nen niha.

Heilemann confirmed for me that that detail is not in the book but was substantiated by HBO.)

Heilemann and Halperin told me that they think there is balance in their portrayal of Palin. Heilemann used words such as poise, magnetism, strength and humanizing to describe the former governor. Both note that her strong convention speech, debate performance, and successful retail campaigning are presented, which is true.

I told them that my 15-year-old son walked into the room while I screened the movie. After watching the Palin portrayal for 10 minutes, he said: "This can't be real."

That's what Sarah Palin is already saying.

But more interesting will be what we do or do not hear from Schmidt and Wallace after the HBO debut. If neither disavows their portrayals, the silence will be deafening.

SARAH

From Page 10

Palin, who has already said the adaptation is based on a "false narrative," has reason to be concerned about her portrayal. It is devastating. She comes across as ill-equipped, unintelligent and obstinate.

It was Schmidt who recognized during the summer of 2008 that the McCain campaign was destined to lose unless it came up with a game-changer. Enter the Alaska governor, who fit that bill but was insufficiently vetted and nevertheless embraced by self-described risk-taker McCain.

After a series of self-inflicted campaign setbacks, Palin is depicted as emotionally unstable and described by staff as being in

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

| TODAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | | | |
| Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. |

▲86° ▾75°

▲86° ▾75°

▲86° ▾76°

▲86° ▾76°

▲86° ▾76°

Micronesia

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Guam and Rota Thundershowers | ▲84 ▾77 |
| Palau | Cloudy ▲85 ▾78 |
| Yap | Showers ▲86 ▾77 |
| Chuuk | Showers ▲88 ▾80 |
| Pohnpei | Showers ▲86 ▾81 |
| Kosrae | Showers ▲86 ▾81 |
| Majuro | Showers ▲86 ▾79 |

Around The Globe

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Auckland | Sunny ▲70 ▾62 |
| Beijing | Sunny ▲55 ▾25 |
| Hong Kong | Showers ▲60 ▾55 |
| Honolulu | Mostly Cloudy ▲78 ▾69 |
| London | Partly Cloudy ▲53 ▾42 |
| Los Angeles | Partly Cloudy ▲60 ▾48 |
| Manila | Partly Cloudy ▲89 ▾79 |
| Melbourne | Mostly Cloudy ▲83 ▾54 |
| Miami | Showers ▲80 ▾69 |
| New York | Cloudy ▲57 ▾47 |
| Osaka | Showers ▲45 ▾35 |
| Paris | Partly Cloudy ▲51 ▾41 |
| Pusan | Sunny ▲47 ▾31 |
| Rome | Sunny ▲61 ▾41 |
| Salem | Showers ▲43 ▾37 |
| San Francisco | Partly Cloudy ▲55 ▾47 |
| Seoul | Mostly Sunny ▲41 ▾23 |
| Tokyo | Partly Cloudy ▲49 ▾34 |
| Washington, DC | Partly Cloudy ▲67 ▾53 |

Tides

| Saipan Harbor | | |
|---------------|-------|---------------------|
| 5:20 AM | Today | Low Tide: 0.6 Feet |
| 10:57 AM | Today | High Tide: 2.0 Feet |
| 5:57 PM | Today | Low Tide: 0.1 Feet |

Sunrise/Sunset

| | | | | | |
|-----------|---------|---------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Today | 6:27 AM | 6:27 PM | Today | 10:21 PM | 9:08 AM |
| Tuesday | 6:26 AM | 6:27 PM | Tuesday | 11:23 PM | 10:02 AM |
| Wednesday | 6:26 AM | 6:27 PM | Wednesday | | 11:00 AM |
| Thursday | 6:25 AM | 6:27 PM | Thursday | 12:23 AM | 11:58 AM |
| Friday | 6:24 AM | 6:27 PM | Friday | 1:19 AM | 12:57 PM |

Moonrise/Moonset

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

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ISLAND SNAPSHTOS

Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.

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A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.

BUSINESS

Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.

SAMUT SARI

Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.

TRAVELOGUE

Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 11, 2012

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

C05062 2:10am 2:40am 1, 5

SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)

C05064 4:15am 4:50am 1, 5

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

C05064 4:15am 5:45am 1, 5 via ROP

C05070 4:35am 5:25am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7

C05068 8:25am 9:15am Daily

C05074 12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7

C05076 3:10pm 4:00pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05078 6:50pm 7:40pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05079 7:00pm 7:50pm 3, 6

C05072 9:55pm 10:45pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05072 10:05pm 10:55pm 3, 6

C05079 8:35pm 9:25pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05079 8:45pm 9:35pm 3, 6

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

C05064 5:15am 5:45am 1, 5

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)

C05062 3:10am 3:45am 1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

C05062 2:10am 3:45am 1, 5 via ROP

C05069 2:45am 3:35am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7

C05071 7:00am 7:50am Daily

C05073 10:05am 10:55am 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05075 1:40pm 2:30pm 1, 4, 5, 7

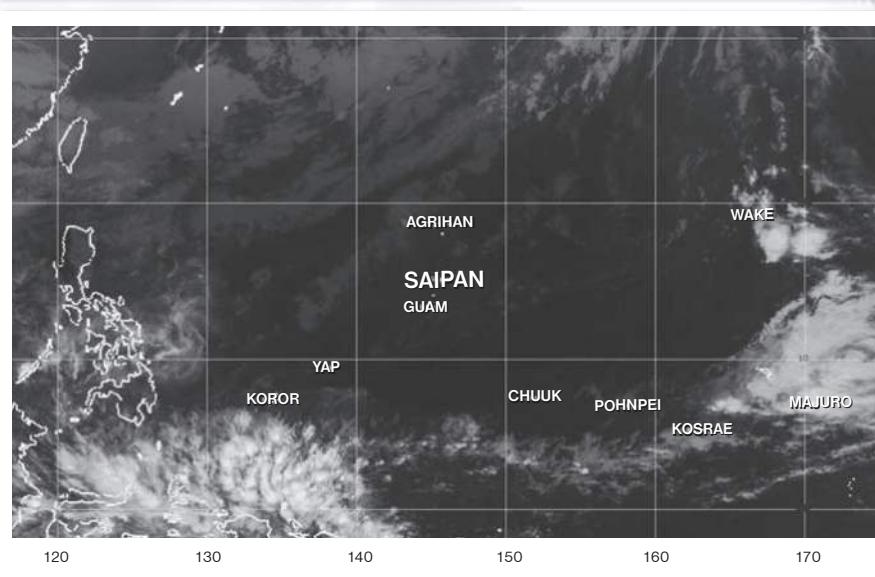
C05077 5:30pm 6:20pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05077 5:40pm 6:30pm 3, 6

C05079 8:35pm 9:25pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

C05079 8:45pm 9:35pm 3, 6

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2012

Western North Pacific between the equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N150E to 19N138E then continues as a shear line to beyond 18N130E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are along and northwest of the cold front to beyond 25N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are along and up to 200 miles north of the shear line. A surface trough northwest of Guam stretches southwestward from 24N149E to 13N137E. Scattered showers are within 75 miles of the trough. Surface winds converging toward a disturbance centered near 1N131E are producing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms south of Koror between 6N and the equator from 130E and 140E. Surface convergence is triggering scattered showers within 100 miles of a line from far southwest of Chuuk at 4N140E eastward south of Pohnpei to end near Kosrae at 5N163E. A trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over the Marshall Islands in an area from 7N162E to 15N172E to 6N177E back to 7N162E. An upper-level low centered near Wake Island at 18N169E is causing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms just southeast of Wake Island between 15N and 21N from 167E to 171E.

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

C05067/721 2:10am 12:00pm 1 via ICN

C05067/721 2:40am 12:00pm 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN

C05070/719 4:35am 9:45am 3, 6 via GUM

DL287/713 6:00am 10:25pm Daily via NRT</p

Letters to the Editor

Exploring possible solutions to Fund mess

I am a recent retiree from PSS on Saipan. I receive a pension of \$1,000 a month (\$1,022). It is my primary means of support. I attended a meeting last week in which the Retirement Fund spokesman proposed solutions to the Fund crisis. One solution was for retirees to take 40-50 percent cut in their pensions for a few years (?) while the CNMI government takes the time to figure out what to do with this horrendously embarrassing situation. It should be horrendously embarrassing! It really looks like somewhere near \$300 million was not remitted to the Fund by the CNMI government. I was told that the Legislature did "appropriate" the money? I am not sure what the legal term is for what really happened. I will attend Judge Govendo's open discussions on March 13 and 14 and try to find out that word.

I do know that I could not live on \$400 to \$500 per month if I camped in the park on Beach Road. Rent, utilities, food, gasoline, auto insurance and repairs, medical insurance—it is already very difficult with my full pension. Top that off with being a cancer patient, and I personally am at my wit's end to see how I will proceed. Four months ago I was afraid I was going to die. Now I am afraid I will live—and be unable to provide for myself. I do not think I am alone with this kind of anxiety. I met several individuals at that meeting on March 6 that were also angry and frightened. Senior citizens afraid of the loss of our dignity. Hardworking citizens that did

Disunity among our leaders

The power battle among our leaders is far from over. Leaders continue to disagree with each other and fail to address critical issues such as the Retirement Fund, CUC, the economy, and now they are facing another obstacle, the newly created Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. Had our leaders focused on the present problems of CUC, they should not have made CHC into another corporation because it will only add another financial burden. It will be better off to just retain the facility as the Commonwealth Health Center under the Executive Branch rather than through the hands of a CEO and advisory board. There is no logic to doing such a thing to our only health center, especially in the present financial crisis. The health center is a critical and important facility for our sick people. Our leaders should not play politics with it. In essence, there is no need to keep debating the financial needs of our health center. Our leaders should immediately work together and address those needs. The health and safety of our people as well as the education of our children have always been your priority ever since you were elected. You should deliver on those commitment and promises. Our ailing economy was one of your priorities as well.

The power in PSS facilities has been disconnected by CUC. This is a disgraceful situation and it should not happen to facilities that serve our children. The welfare and environment of our children should be uppermost in the minds of our leaders. Our leaders should assist PSS and prevent CUC from doing such a drastic thing. This goes as well for the health center where CUC should not disconnect power, as the facility is so critical to our patients. This will be a challenging year for our leaders as the people will closely evaluate and rate your performance for the past two years. Critical problems affecting our people in the CNMI will be the target issues to those seeking re-election and new aspirants as the year 2012 political battle begins. I wish our leaders good luck and may you all unite and work forward for the betterment of our people.

Rufo Maratita
Sinapalo I, Rota

Hired

From Page 10

Schools need nutritionists. How about forming small home repair companies to paint our homes and do other maintenance work?

The problem is that we need to improve our employment skills. Look at our friends who are earning over the minimum wage. Why? Simply put, they have a skill to offer and the employer is willing to pay the fair market value. Begin now with either a home study course that fits our goal or come and join us at the Northern Marianas Trades Institute. Unheard of opportunities await you upon completion. We better believe it to be true.

Another complaint I have noticed coming from the private sector is the frequent tardiness of many local employees. This act of tardiness is especially prevalent in the public sector. Try to see someone in most government offices before 8:30am. This is a chronic problem that affects us when we go for an interview. Somehow we fail to realize that reporting late to work reflects our poor attitude toward the job and the company we are employed in.

The worst of all is that the employee doesn't realize that he is

everything right and planned to be able to provide for themselves when old and weak. What a surprise to get the news.

I think the senator at the March 6 meeting said that the Legislature did allocate the proper funds to the Fund. I believe she meant that the Legislature was not responsible for the problem, only for the solution. She said the Legislature was working on a series of ideas and proposals and showed a photocopied list of pending legislation. She said the Legislature is having a hard time getting an agreement on these issues. She said that several times! Several individuals came forth with obvious possibilities for funding the Retirement Fund, like income tax, sales tax, and property tax. All these are things that share the solution with all citizens. The Legislature is well aware of the obvious solutions. I assume they are aware of all possible solutions? They need to know that they need to act on the solutions.

What happened to the Social Security Administration's offer to take over the NMI Retirement Fund? I never did hear the exact mechanics of that deal. The only follow-up on that report was that I later heard that the administration didn't like that proposal because they felt that, if they were to participate in Social Security, they would have to make their contributions on time! Read that again for me, please.

I personally think that Social Security for all Saipan is the best advancement the government could make. Then all workers in the CNMI would have the same program. A person could go from being a government employee to being a public sector employee

A mistake from the start

This is in response to Tan Pedro R. Deleon Guerrero's column titled "Article 12 must stay" (*Saipan Tribune*, March 9, 2012) concerning the land alienation issue in the CNMI, better known as Article 12. You stated that Article 12 is about the continued existence of persons of Northern Marianas descent and their rights, privileges, and opportunities, hence it shall be debated and decided only by the people of the Commonwealth who are persons of Northern Marianas descent and that should be accepted and respected by all regardless.

How do you define Northern Marianas descent? What rights, privileges, and opportunities have we been afforded by the CNMI government? Are you talking about the CNMI descent who are related or friends of CNMI elected officials and the former board of directors of the Marianas Public Lands Authority? Since many of us were being denied our homestead and agriculture land for political reason, are we considered non-CNMI descent too? What is your definition of CNMI descent? Do you have to be politically connected to be afforded the right, privilege, and opportunities? *Tan Pedro*, please clarify your definition of the CNMI descent.

According to my cousin, the late Jose Cruz (Pinchang), the floodgate had been opened and there are no recourses to stop the flow. Our elected officials in the past sold our future, for the mere fact that our elders were uneducated and they had no sense of direction when it came to the American politicos. I agree with you that Article 12 is not the culprit relating to our economic downturn. But I strongly disagree with you that we need to keep the land alienation policy in the CNMI.

Article 12 was a mistake from the very beginning because it was a breeding ground for discrimination against other ethnicities in our island chain. The land alienation policy does not only discriminate against other races but it also discriminates against the very people who are entitled to your so-called rights, privileges, and opportunities to get homestead. The relatives and friends of the former MPLA board of directors were being given the opportunity to have the most pristine homestead in the CNMI. You may drive alongside Kammer Beach on Tinian and you will see that most of the homesteaders were related to the former board of directors. Maybe your main objective to keep Article 12 in the CNMI is to preserve the status quo. You can't have it both ways, being an American and for you to continue to contradict the very foundation (U.S. Constitution and amendments) that makes the United States unique.

Segundo Castro
San Jose, Tinian

cheating and stealing from his employer. If one were to steal a \$100 from the company, he would be labeled a thief and fired. But when an employee is repeatedly late or absent then expects to be paid full time, what is the difference? Isn't he shortchanging his employer by not fulfilling his promise to work as agreed upon?

Another problem my experience has shown is that at times it isn't our fault at all that we aren't hired. It is the employers! Too often they refuse to hire us for purely selfish reasons. Even if we are qualified, they refuse to hire us because to them hiring nonresident workers is so much easier. In many cases they can bully the employees with threats that if they aren't docile and willing to do anything the employers tell them, the employees will be sent home.

A plea to all employers: Though it may take a bit of adjusting to changing from nonresident workers to resident workers, the move will be very positive in a short time in many ways. I speak from experience in doing this. Please let's consider hiring local residents the next time we need employees. They are great workers.

If our economy is ever to rebound we must be part of the reason. And that is we must create jobs or at least give local residents a chance. None of this is meant to disparage the wonderful work that

without giving up, losing, or compromising their retirement investments. CNMI citizens could work in the United States and have a continuous retirement investment. The changes would be nowhere near as painful as the changes we will get if we wait for Legislature to figure out a solution that they all agree upon. Let us tell them what to do! They are sworn to do what the citizens tell them to do.

Jim McMahon
Fina Sisu, Saipan

Reflections

I am a grateful off-island native who enjoys your paper online everyday to keep up with news at home. I am a student attending California State University in Sacramento. At 14, I was sent here against my will by my barely-getting-by parents. While trying to find my footing in this enormous foreign land, I lost my sense of direction, of who I was, and afraid of what I'd become. Luckily, my father made sure to remind me to never forget where you come from.

After 12 years I can still hear the waves crashing against Banzai Cliff. I can feel the gentle breeze lift my hair off my shoulders while the blazing sun darkens over my already *dokngos* skin. I'll never forget standing atop Mount Tapochau and capturing every green edge by simply turning in a circle. I plan to revisit Saipan, but not until I can return with an education that will benefit my fellow islanders.

I thank my parents who have sacrificed their means and continue to live underprivileged in a little lonely house in Kagman III. I would like to encourage future leaders of the CNMI and advise them that the possibilities are endless for those who aim high and work hard. Saipan will always be home, but the sooner you leave, the sooner you can come back, just as I will soon.

Fermina Camacho
Sacramento, California

Bon voyage

On behalf of the Filipino workers on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota we would like to extend a warmest and sincere appreciation to attorney Dyan Kristine B. Miranda, the Philippine Consulate General's consular assistant, property and legal officer, who is a very active and generous public servant to overseas Filipino workers, a great supporter of all Filipino community activities, and a great adviser to OFWs who are in dire need of legal services. Without her expertise and timely assistance in times when OFWs are in the midst of immigration issues and uncertainties, attorney Dyan was right behind us with her helping hand. The time has come to an end when a true and dedicated public servant bids goodbye to an entire constituent not only for economic reasons but to fulfill another task that awaits her back home. Congratulations for passing the Philippine Foreign Service Exam and thank you very much for being our legal mentor during the October Twenty One Movement (OTOM) attempt to extend the final regulation date of implementation in favor of all foreign workers, especially OFWs.

Good luck to your future endeavors. Rest assured that your legacy and your professionalism in the field of legal services here on this beautiful island of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota will always be on our minds. OFWs in the Northern Mariana Islands are very grateful of your kindness and generosity. Your accomplishment in taking care of Philippine Consulate legal matters will always be in our hearts and thoughts.

Bon voyage to you Dyan on your way back home to the Philippines and best wishes on your new chosen country to work and live. I behalf of MAFEA, Bicol Association, and OTOM in the Northern Mariana Islands, we will always remember you as a good friend and outstanding public servant and a great leader. Mabuhay ka kabayan! God Bless and more power!

Carlito J. Marquez
Puerto Rico, Saipan

our nonresident workers have been doing and are still doing. It is just that we must rebuild our economy. And the strongest way is to minimize our unemployment rate among locals.

Times have changed. Our society is not the same as 20 years ago. We live in a new and different competitive world. Jobs given to local residents will greatly reduce the number of them on food stamps. And it will add to the strength of our country as well as allow more money to circulate within the community.

It takes everyone to build a strong community: local residents with a desire to learn skills and to work, employers willing to hire them, and the encouragement and motivation from the government. We all must cooperate. We all succeed or we all fail!

"Work is love made visible. And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms from those who work with joy."

This quotation is from *The Prophet* written by Kahlil Gibran many years ago but is still sound advice.

It is only in the dictionary that the word "success" comes before the word "work." Keep smiling! Remember a smile is the window into our hearts. It can only get better. Have a nice week!

Business

Greece secures biggest debt deal in history

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—Greece's private creditors agreed Friday to take cents on the euro in the biggest debt writedown in history, paving the way for an enormous second bailout for the country to keep Europe's economy from being dragged further into chaos.

Greece would have risked defaulting on its debt in two weeks without the agreement, sparking turmoil in the markets and send-

ing shock waves through the other 16 countries that use the euro.

Prime Minister Lucas Papademos called the deal—which shaves some euro105 billion (\$138 billion) off Greece's euro368 billion (\$487 billion) debt load—an important “historic success” in a televised address to the nation Friday night. “For the first time, Greece is not adding but taking debt off the backs of its citizens.”

The country said 83.5 percent of private investors holding its government debt had agreed to a bond swap, taking a cut of more than half the face value of their investments as well as accepting softer repayment terms for Greece.

The swap aiming to turn around the country's debt-ridden economy was a key condition to secure a euro130 billion (\$172 billion) rescue package from

other eurozone countries and the International Monetary Fund.

The managing director of the Institute of International Finance, which negotiated the deal with Greece for large investors, called the bond swap “the largest ever” debt restructuring.

“This has been painful and the pain is not over yet. But I now can see light at the end of the tunnel for the Greek economy,” Charles Dallara told

Greece's Mega television. He estimated Greece could return to the markets “within a few years.” If recovery continues, “I think the risk for Greece and the risk on the eurozone will be very manageable,” he said.

Of the investors holding the euro177 billion (\$234 billion) in bonds governed by Greek law, 85.8 percent joined. The deadline for those owning foreign-law bonds was extended to March 23. Creditors holding Greek-law

bonds who refused to sign up will be forced into the deal—breaking a taboo that the euro

The decision to force losses on some bondholders means that the debt relief will trigger payouts of so-called credit default swaps, a type of insurance on bonds. The International Swaps and Derivatives Association, the private organization that rules on such cases, said its committee ruled that a “restructuring credit event” occurred.

Strong 3 months of hiring as US adds 227,000 jobs



In this Thursday, March 8, 2012 photo, a help-wanted sign displays outside the Mayfield Drive-In movie theater in Chardon, Ohio. AP

WASHINGTON (AP)—The United States added 227,000 jobs in February, the latest display of the breadth and strength of the economic recovery. The country has put together the most impressive three months of job growth since before the Great Recession.

The unemployment rate stayed at 8.3 percent. It was the first time in six months it didn't fall, and that was because a half-million Americans started looking for work. In the past two months, almost a million have started looking.

“I have more optimism,” said Freda Bratcher, 54, who had worked as a substance abuse counselor but has been unemployed 16 months. She had stopped searching, but showed up Friday at a Miami career center after some of her friends landed jobs.

“There's something out there for me,” she said. “And if other people are getting hired, then why not me?”

The Labor Department, in its monthly jobs report, said Friday that December and January, already two of the best months for

jobs since the recession, were even stronger than first estimated.

January job growth was revised higher by 41,000 to 284,000. December job growth was raised by 20,000 to 223,000. The overall job growth for February of 227,000 beat economists' estimate of 210,000.

“It's a very strong report,” said Bob Baur, chief global economist at Principal Global Investors, an asset management company. “I could hardly find anything not to like in it.”

Since the beginning of De-

cember, the country has added 734,000 jobs. The only three-month stretch that was better since the recession ended was March through May 2010, when the government was hiring tens of thousands of temporary workers for the census.

Before that, the last stretch that was better was February through April 2006. A three-month gain of 734,000 is roughly what the country was achieving in the late 1990s, although it is less impressive now because the country holds about 40 million more people.

Obama strikes back at GOP critics on gas prices

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama is hitting back at Republican criticism of his energy policies and his role in controlling gasoline prices.

Obama used his weekly radio and Internet address Saturday to underscore his administration's work to develop alternative energy sources and increase fuel efficiency.

“I'm going to keep doing everything I can to help you save money on gas, both right now and in the future,” Obama said. “I hope politicians from both sides of the aisle join me.”

He accused Republicans of a “bumper sticker” approach to solving the nation's energy problems.

It's a familiar theme—Obama stuck many of the same chords during two out-of-town trips this week and during a White House news conference on Wednesday.

“We can't just drill our way to lower gas prices—not when we consume 20 percent of the world's oil,” Obama said in the

address, recorded during a visit Friday to a Virginia jet engine component plant.

In the Republican weekly address, North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple accused the Obama administration of blocking projects and technology that would allow greater energy production. He singled out the Keystone XL pipeline project, which Obama deferred.

“Without a large north-south pipeline,” Dalrymple said. “North Dakota oil producers were scheduled to feed the Keystone pipeline with 100,000 barrels of crude oil per day.”

Obama said there wasn't enough time to properly study the project ahead of the deadline forced upon him by Republican congressional lawmakers. On Thursday, the Democratic-controlled Senate blocked another Republican bid to speed approval of the pipeline, which would stretch from Canada to refineries on the Texas Gulf Coast.



American Airlines jet delayed by ‘altercation’

DALLAS (AP)—Passengers on American Airlines Flight 2332 were settling in for a trip to Chicago on Friday when they say a flight attendant took over the public-address system and launched into a rant that included references to 9-11 and the safety of their plane.

At first puzzled, then frightened, several passengers wrestled the flight attendant into a seat while the plane was still on the ground at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

The pilot returned the plane to the gate, where it was met by airport police and the FBI. After a delay of more than an hour, the plane finally took off.

A federal law enforcement official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation was continuing said that airport police determined the incident was a medical issue and not a security threat.

The official said the flight attendant was taken to Parkland Hospital in Dallas for evaluation. American said two crew

members went to hospitals after the incident.

Bethany Christakos of Dallas, seated toward the rear of the plane, said passengers started “freaking out” as one of the flight attendants launched into a rambling, 15-minute speech.

“She said, ‘I'm not responsible for this plane crashing,’” Christakos said.

Another passenger, Stephen Tremunde, said, “We were pretty frightened. She made two comments that if we didn't go back to the gate we would crash.”

“The last thing I heard her say before someone pulled the mic out of her hand was, ‘Hey pilot, I'm not going to be responsible for your crash,’” said Greg Lozano of Elmhurst, Ill.

Brad LeClear of Fox Lake, Ill., said he was one of several passengers who restrained the flight attendant. She said something about 9-11—that she wished she could have stopped the terror attacks that used hijacked jetliners, he said.



Brad LeClear, a passenger on an American Airlines flight from Dallas to Chicago, talks to reporters upon landing in Chicago, after the flight was disrupted when a flight attendant ranted about the plane crashing Friday, March 9, 2012. AP

Nation

Santorum takes Kansas, Romney counters in Wyoming

WASHINGTON (AP)—Rick Santorum won the Kansas caucuses in a rout on Saturday and Republican presidential front-runner Mitt Romney countered in Wyoming, a weekend prelude to suddenly pivotal Southern primary showdowns in the week ahead.

"Things have an amazing way of working out," Santorum told supporters in Missouri, where he traced his campaign through a series of highs and lows. He called his showing in Kansas a "comfortable win" that would give him the vast majority of the 40 delegates at stake.

Final returns in Kansas showed Santorum with 51

percent support, far outpacing Romney, who had 21 percent. Newt Gingrich had 14 percent and Ron Paul trailed with 13 percent.

Santorum picked up 33 of the state's 40 delegates at stake, cutting slightly into Romney's overwhelming's advantage.

In Wyoming, Romney won seven of the 12 delegates at stake, Santorum three, Paul one. Uncommitted also won one.

The day's events unfolded as the candidates pointed toward Tuesday's primaries in Alabama and Mississippi that loom as unexpectedly important in the race

Polls show a close race in both states, particularly Alabama, where Romney, Gingrich and Santorum all added to their television advertising overnight for the race's final days.

Gingrich, struggling for survival in the race, can ill afford a loss in either Mississippi or Alabama.

Romney is seeking a Southern breakthrough to demonstrate an ability to win the support of evangelical voters.

For his part, Santorum hopes to knock Gingrich out of the race and finally emerge

as Romney's sole challenger from the right.

The contests in Kansas and

Wyoming left Romney with 454 delegates in the AP's count, more than all his rivals combined. Santorum had 217, while Gingrich had 107 and Paul had 47.

Romney's totals included 22 that he picked up in the Virgin Islands, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands.

A candidate must win 1,144 to clinch the Republican presidential nomination at the national convention in Tampa

next August.

Kansas and Wyoming caucuses had little in common except a shared date on the campaign calendar.

Romney made a stop in sparsely populated Wyoming last summer.

Kansas drew more attention from the White House hopefuls, but not much more, given its position midway between Super Tuesday and potentially pivotal primaries next Tuesday in Mississippi and Alabama.

Romney left Kansas to his rivals, while Gingrich scrubbed a scheduled campaign trip to concentrate on the South.

Paul and Santorum both cam-

paign in the state on Friday, and Gov. Sam Brownback appeared with each, without making an endorsement.

In Topeka, Paul told an audience of about 500 that Kansas should be a "fertile field" for his libertarian-leaning views but declined to say how many delegates he hoped to gain.

Santorum, who hopes to drive Gingrich from the race in the coming week, lashed out at Obama and Romney simultaneously in remarks in the Kansas capital city.

"We already have one president who doesn't tell the truth to the American people. We don't need another," he said.

Storied carrier, 'the Big E,' makes final voyage

NORFOLK, Va. (AP)—When the makers of "Top Gun" were filming on board the USS Enterprise, they donated a set of black fuzzy dice to liven up the ship's otherwise drab interior.

A quarter-century later, the dice will still be dangling inside the tower of "the Big E" as the world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier sets sail on its final voyage Sunday.

The trinket is a reminder of the ship's storied 50-year history that includes action in several wars, a prominent role in the Cuban missile crisis and serving as a spotter ship for John Glenn's historic orbit of the earth.

"To serve on this ship, certainly in this capacity, you certainly have to be a student of the ship's history," said Rear Adm. Walter Carter, commander of the Enterprise strike group. "Fifty years of service, in our nation's history, we've never had a warship in service that long."

The Enterprise is the longest aircraft carrier in the U.S. fleet. It is also the oldest, a distinction that brings pride as well as plenty of headaches for the ship's more than 4,000 crew members. The ship is effectively a small city that frequently needs repairs because of its age. It was originally designed to last 25 years, but a major overhaul in 1979 and other improvements have extended its life.

The ship largely looks like any other carrier on the inside and has modern amenities like gyms, a coffee shop and a television station with dozens of channels. It even produces its own daily newspaper while at sea.

But even the best-maintained ship faces challenges as it ages.

"It's kind of like when you get older and you know it's harder to get out of the bed in the morning. It takes you a couple hours to kind of really get up and then you're fine. Well, it's the same sort of thing here with Enterprise," Capt. William Hamilton, the ship's commanding officer, said days before the ship was set to deploy



In this March 8, 2012 photo, sailors move supplies and equipment as they prepare for the final deployment of the nuclear aircraft carrier USS Enterprise at the Norfolk Naval Station in Norfolk, Va.

from Naval Station Norfolk.

Hamilton acknowledged all aircraft carriers have problems they're supposed to anticipate, but he said the Enterprise is more likely to have "unknown unknowns" than newer ships.

Machinists in charge of fixing unexpected problems say the things that can break down range from critical air conditioner units to elevators that lift fighter jets from the hangar bay to the flight deck. Moreover, the Enterprise has eight nuclear reactors to maintain—six more than any other U.S. carrier.

The problems are so notorious that sailors reporting to work aboard the Enterprise are often given joking condolences by their colleagues on shore and

on other ships.

The ship regularly has to make its own parts from scratch when something breaks down. Spare parts for much of the ship, which is the only one of its class, simply don't exist.

"Life is hard on Enterprise," Hamilton said. "But when they leave here, they leave knowing if they can do this, they can do anything."

The challenges aboard the ship and the need to keep spirits up were highlighted last year, when former commanding officer Capt. Owen Honors was fired for airing raunchy videos that he said were intended to boost morale. During a hearing in which Honors was trying to avoid being kicked out of the Navy, he and his lawyers

frequently referenced the difficult conditions on board. Honors was found to have committed misconduct, but ultimately allowed to stay in the service. He is retiring in April.

Hamilton acknowledged that maintaining morale on the ship—which has unofficial mottos like "There's tough, and then there's Enterprise tough" and "We eat pain like candy"—is still vital.

"As much as anything, it's just telling them face to face that you appreciate, the Navy appreciates, the nation appreciates what they're doing and then that goes a long, long way," he said.

The ship's crew members feel

ACROSS THE NATION

Pentagon aims to resume military help for Yemen

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Pentagon plans to resume programs that would pay for military training and equipment in Yemen, nearly a year after halting aid to the key counterterrorism partner because of escalating internal chaos. While no agreements have been cemented, U.S. defense officials said as much as \$75 million in military assistance could begin to flow this year. The officials said the Pentagon and State Department are putting together a letter to send to Congress to request restarted the aid. The plan is in line with the Obama administration's intention to provide significant security and civilian aid to Yemen in 2012-13 as long as the Middle Eastern country makes progress toward a new government and the money is kept from insurgents.

4 fishermen missing after debris spotted off Wash.

ASTORIA, Ore. (AP)—Authorities pledged to search throughout the night Saturday for four people who disappeared from a fishing trawler. A distress beacon led U.S. Coast Guard

particularly proud to serve on a ship whose name has a distinguished place in naval history and pop culture.

Crew members who weren't even alive when "Top Gun" was in theaters in 1986 use the film to explain what it is they do on the ship, as well as exactly where it is they do it.

For Petty Officer 1st Class Brian Dennis, there's also pride in his ship having the same name as the ship featured in the "Star Trek" series.

"I always wanted to be a part of history, so being on this last deployment it'll be something I can definitely tell my children and grandchildren," he said.

The Enterprise is heading to

outside and threatened to blow up the school. The school was placed on lockdown. Capt. John Cornwell tells the News Journal of Wilmington that Thomas was released on \$2,500 unsecured bail and ordered to have no contact with the Cape Henlopen School District.

Woman gives birth to son weighing nearly 14 pounds

SAN DIEGO (AP)—A Southern California woman says doctors predicted she would give birth to a big baby boy, but nobody was prepared for just how big. Jayden Sigler weighed in at 13 pounds, 14 ounces, when the healthy boy was delivered Thursday by cesarean section, the North County Times reported Saturday. His mother, Cynthia Sigler of Vista, said that her immediate reaction was: "How'd he fit?" Doctors initially estimated that Jayden would weigh about 9 pounds, but that number jumped to 11 by early March, the mother told the newspaper. Dr. Jerald White, who delivered the baby at Tri-City Medical Center, said Jayden was the biggest of the 20,000 newborns he has helped usher into the world since he started in 1961.

Asia

Japan marks 1 year since quake, tsunami disaster

By MIKI TODA and MALCOLM FOSTER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

RIKUZENTAKATA, Japan (AP)—Through silence and prayers, people across Japan on Sunday remembered the massive earthquake and tsunami that struck the nation one year ago, killing just over 19,000 people and unleashing the world's worst nuclear crisis in a quarter century.

A moment of silence was observed at 2:46 p.m.—the exact time the magnitude-9.0 quake struck on March 11, 2011.

In the devastated northeastern coastal town of Rikuzentakata, a siren sounded and a Buddhist priest in a purple robe rang a huge bell at a damaged temple overlooking a barren area where houses once stood.

At the same time in Tokyo's National Theater, Emperor Akihito, Empress Michiko and Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda stood in silence with hundreds of other people dressed in black at a memorial service.

The quake was the strongest recorded in Japan's history, and set off a tsunami that towered more than 65 feet (20 meters) in some spots along the northeastern coast, destroying tens of thousands of homes and wreaking widespread destruction.

Naomi Fujino, a 42-year-old Rikuzentakata resident who lost her father in the tsunami, was in tears recalling last March 11.

With her mother, she escaped to a nearby hill where they watched the enormous wave wash away their



Mika Hashikai, 37, mourns for her mother and father, victims of the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami, in Rikuzentakata, Iwate Prefecture, northeastern Japan, Sunday, March 11, 2012.

home. They waited all night, but her father never came to meet them as he had promised. Two months later, his body was found.

"I wanted to save people, but I couldn't. I couldn't even help my father. I cannot keep on crying," Fujino said. "What can I do but keep on going?"

The tsunami also knocked out the vital cooling systems at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant, causing meltdowns at three reactors and spewing radiation into the air. Some 100,000 residents who were forced to flee remain in temporary housing or with relatives, and a 12-mile (20-kilometer) area around the plant is still off limits.

With her mother, she escaped to a nearby hill where they watched the enormous wave wash away their

All told, some 325,000 people rendered homeless or evacuated are still in temporary housing. While much of the debris along the tsunami-ravaged coast has been gathered into massive piles, very little rebuilding has begun.

Beyond the massive cleanup, many towns are still finalizing reconstruction plans, some of which involve moving residential areas to higher ground. Bureaucratic delays in coordination between the central government, prefectural (state) authorities and local officials have also slowed rebuilding efforts.

A year after the disaster, police and other experts continue to search for the bodies of 3,155 people listed as

missing, adding to the sense of loss for mourning relatives.

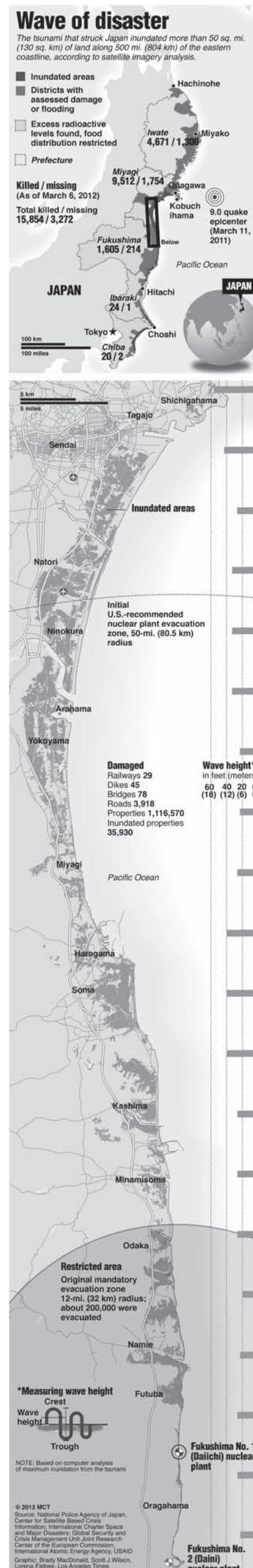
Anti-nuclear protesters at a downtown Tokyo park also held a moment of silence Sunday before marching toward the headquarters of Tokyo Electric Power Co., the operator of the Fukushima nuclear power plant. Public opposition to atomic power has grown in the wake of the nuclear disaster, the worst since Chernobyl in 1986.

The government says the crippled Fukushima nuclear plant is stable and that radiation has subsided significantly, but the plant's chief acknowledged to journalists visiting the complex recently that it remains in a fragile state, and makeshift equipment—some mended with tape—could be seen keeping crucial systems running.

Enormous risks and challenges lie ahead at the Fukushima plant, including locating and removing melted nuclear fuel from the inside of the reactors and disposing spent fuel rods. Completely decommissioning the plant could take 40 years.

Only two of Japan's 54 reactors are now running while those shut down for regular inspections undergo special tests to check their ability to withstand similar disasters. They could all go offline by the end of April amid local opposition to restarting them.

The Japanese government has pledged to reduce reliance on nuclear power, which supplied about 30 percent of the nation's energy needs before the disaster, but says it needs to restart some nuclear plants during the transition period.



Afghans find victims entombed by avalanche

RAWANAK, Afghanistan (AP)—The only warning was the strong wind that howled through the village of Daspai.

One minute Nazar Khuda's sister was at her sewing machine. The next minute she was dead.

She was one of at least 50 people killed when an avalanche of snow, ice and mud thundered off a nearby mountain and buried the village in a disaster-prone area of northeastern Afghanistan where Mother Nature is a bigger enemy than the Taliban.

"We dug down to find the house, and we found the body of my sister over the sewing machine," said Khuda, who lost a total of eight relatives

in the avalanche that struck at 9 a.m. last Sunday. "When I saw her body, I couldn't stop crying. After that, I helped the others dig bodies out of the snow."

Twenty children and teenagers and two teachers were found inside a mosque where they had been studying the Quran.

People from nearby villages continued to work on Saturday to see if any more people were still buried in up to 10 feet (3 meters) of snow in the remote village that is still cut off from most outsiders. It's unclear if more will be found. Government officials said 200 people lived in Da-

spai, but area residents said that estimate was high. They said up to 13 people were injured.

Accounts by Khuda and others who walked through deep snow to get to Daspai are the first detailed narratives of the tragedy in Shakay district of Badakhshan province near the Tajikistan border.

"We spent all day looking for our family members," Khuda said Thursday, standing atop a steep mountain in Rawanak, about a five-hour trek over snow-covered mountains from the avalanche site. "From morning until evening, we dug in the snow and mud. The wooden beams of the

houses had collapsed. It was difficult to find the bodies."

His sister's 4-year-old son, 6-year-old daughter, who was at the mosque, her husband and four relatives from his family also died in the avalanche. Another one of his sister's children, 13-year-old Abdul Wasi, was staying with Khuda in Rawanak. The storm turned him into an orphan.

Khuda said he spoke with a young girl who was in the mosque when it collapsed from the weight of the snow. "She had been trying to warm her hands near a stove in the mosque and when the avalanche hit, her hands were pressed onto the stove," Khuda said. "She had burns on her hands, feet and forehead."

China: 24K abducted women, children rescued in '11

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese police rescued more than 24,000 abducted women and children across the country last year, the country's Public Security Ministry said Sunday. Trafficking in women and children is a big problem in China, where traditional preference for male heirs and a strict one-child policy has driven a thriving market in baby boys, who fetch a considerably higher price than girls. Girls and women also are abducted and used as laborers or as brides for unwed sons. A report from the ministry said police rescued 8,660 abducted children and 15,458 women in 2011 as nearly 3,200 human trafficking gangs were broken up.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Police: Bomb kills 10 in northwest Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—A police officer says a bomb has killed 10 people at a funeral in northwest Pakistan. Abid Rehman said the bomb Sunday was apparently targeting a local politician who had been critical of Islamist militants in the region. The politician, Khushdil Khan, escaped unhurt. Rehman said around 30 people were wounded in the blast on the outskirts of Peshawar, the main city in northwest Pakistan.

Official: US service member opened fire on Afghans

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—A U.S. service member walked out of his base in southern Afghanistan on Sunday and

started shooting Afghan civilians, the provincial governor said. People were both killed and wounded in the early morning shooting spree in Panjwai district of Kandahar province, Gov. Tooryalai Wesa said, though he did not provide numbers. "The incident happened. There are some people killed, some wounded. But I don't have the details," Wesa said in a phone interview. He said a group of officials had gone to the base to determine exactly what happened. NATO forces spokesman Justin Brockhoff said a U.S. service member had been detained as the alleged shooter but did not provide details on the incident.

Suu Kyi poke at army banned from Myanmar state TV

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Myan-

mar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi is set to promote her party's political platform on state-run radio and television but won't be allowed to criticize the previous military-run governments. National League for Democracy spokesman Nyan Win says her party platform broadcast to be taped Monday has been approved, but that a paragraph was excised under regulations that include a ban on statements harming the military's image. The statement will be broadcast on March 14 and 22, ahead of April 1 by-elections. Suu Kyi told U.S.-funded Radio Free Asia on Saturday that the censored part concerned the lack of rule of law and how laws enacted by military governments are oppressive. Her party will contest all 48 seats in Parliament that are at stake.

World

Syria assaults opposition as diplomacy staggers

BEIRUT (AP)—Syria launched a long-anticipated assault to crush the opposition in the rebellious north on Saturday, bombarding its main city with tank shells from all sides and clashing with rebel fighters struggling to hold back an invasion.

President Bashar Assad rejected any immediate negotiations with the opposition, striking a further blow to already staggering international efforts for talks to end to the conflict. Assad told U.N. envoy Kofi Annan that a political solution is impossible as long as “terrorist groups” threaten the country.

The opposition’s political leadership has also rejected dialogue, saying talk is impossible after a yearlong crackdown that the U.N. estimates has killed more than 7,500 people. That makes it likely that the conflict will continue to edge toward civil war.

Syrian forces have been building up for days around Idlib, the capital of a hilly, agricultural province along the Syria-Turkey border that has been a hotbed of protests against

Assad’s regime.

Saturday morning, troops blasted Idlib for hours with dozens of tank shells as the forces moved to encircle the town, an Associated Press team in Idlib reported.

Families fled their homes, carrying blankets and a few other meager belongings. Others huddled in homes.

Rebel fighters rushed through Idlib’s streets, taking cover behind walls to fire on the attackers with automatic weapons, the AP team said. Trucks sped wounded fighters to clinics, and men on one street destroyed speed bumps with shovels so ambulances could drive faster. Many low-level soldiers in the area have joined the opposition and fight along with civilians who have taken up arms as part of the loosely organized Free Syrian Army.

Many fear the offensive in Idlib could end up like the regime’s campaign against a rebel-held neighborhood in the central city of Homs. Troops besieged and shelled Baba Amr for weeks before capturing it on March 1. Activists say hundreds

were killed, and a U.N. official who visited the area this week said she was “horrified” by the destruction in the district, now virtually deserted.

Late Saturday, Idlib activist Fadi al-Yassin said the army had closed off the city’s main exits, making harder for civilians to flee. Rebel fighters destroyed six armored trucks in an ambush and shot down one helicopter with a high-caliber machine gun, he said.

Al-Yassin estimated that the city has as many as 1,000 fighters, but that they have mostly light arms and are short on ammunition. Most supply lines have been cut.

“The Free Army will be able to keep them out for a while, but if they cannot get more weapons and if the army keeps shelling from outside, they won’t be able to hold out,” he said.

“Right now their morale is very high,” he said. But, he added, “We worry that what happened in Baba Amr will happen here.”

In the evening, clashes eased, with occasional shells falling on the city, al-Yassin said. He said

many were killed and injured but could not be taken to the central hospital because regime forces controlled it and other government buildings.

Regime forces ambushed a group of rebels heading to Idlib to join the fight, killing 16, according to two activist groups—the Local Coordination Committees and the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Al-Yassin’s claims and the death tolls could not be independently verified.

The Observatory said 17 civilians were killed in Idlib province Saturday, part of 28 killed nationwide. It said five other rebels were killed in fighting elsewhere, and that 19 regime troops were killed in Idlib and outside of Damascus. The LCC said 63 were killed nationwide, including 46 in Idlib province.

Al-Yassin’s claims and the death tolls could not be independently verified.

The visit to Damascus by Annan, a former U.N. secretary-general, is the centerpiece of a high-profile international attempt to find a solution to the worsening conflict amid sharp divisions among world powers and Arab countries over how to deal with the crisis.

Annan planned a second round of talks with the Syrian president on Sunday, the U.N. spokesperson’s office said in a statement.

Israeli airstrikes kill 15 Gaza militants

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Israel pounded Gaza for the second day in a row Saturday, trading airstrikes and rocket fire with Palestinian militants and killing 15 of them as the deadliest Gaza violence in over a year showed no signs of abating.

Despite Egyptian efforts to mediate a cease-fire, Palestinians fired more than 100 rockets, some striking major cities in southern Israel and seriously wounding an Israeli civilian. The military responded with more than a dozen airstrikes and the targeted killings of Palestinian militants from various Gaza organizations.

Israel’s lauded Iron Dome missile defense system intercepted more than 25 projectiles. Still, residents were told to stay close to home and the cities of Beersheba, Ashdod and Ashkelon called off school for Sunday.

Tit-for-tat exchanges between Israel and Palestinians have been routine since the 2009 war, but a flare-up of this intensity is rare. The Arab League called the Israeli attacks a “massacre.” The United Nations and the State Department condemned the violence and called on both sides to exercise restraint.

“This round in Gaza is far from being over,” Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said in a visit to southern Israel. “We will not allow anyone to harm the citizens of the country and we will act against anyone who attempts to launch rockets.

They will pay a heavy price, and no one will have immunity.”

The latest spate of violence got under way Friday afternoon, when an Israeli airstrike on a car in Gaza City killed top militant commander Zuhair al-Qaissi and two of his underlings. It was the highest-profile killing Israel has carried out in many months, interrupting a period of relative calm on the volatile southern front.

Almost immediately, Gaza militants unleashed a barrage of rockets toward southern Israeli border communities.

So far, militants have fired more than 100 rockets since al-Qaissi’s killing, a major escalation from recent months. Palestinian militants fired some 50 rockets toward Israel in the previous three months.

Gaza’s militant Islamic Hamas rulers condemned the Israeli strike but, pointedly, their fighters did not fire rockets at Israel. Instead, they quietly allowed other smaller Palestinian militant groups to unleash salvos.

In previous flare-ups, Hamas has used such a strategy to allow Palestinian militants to burn off their anger, with an eye toward the exchange of strikes eventually quieting down.

Hamas hasn’t been eager to participate in rocket barrages since Israel conducted a punishing three-week war against the militant group in 2009. Hundreds of Palestinian civilians and militants were killed and the air and ground assault destroyed

much of Hamas’ infrastructure.

Since then, Hamas has sought to shore up its Gaza rule and amass a better weapons arsenal. Still, Israel’s military said Hamas, as the territory’s ruler, would “bear the consequences” for any attacks that emerged from Gaza.

Egypt, which has helped arrange truces in the past, said Saturday it was trying to cobble together a cease-fire.

“(We) won’t give this occupation a free truce while our leaders and heroes are being killed,” said Abu Mujahid, spokesman for al-Qaissi’s group.

The U.N. and the State Department on Saturday called for an end to the violence.

“We deplore the fact that civilians are once again paying the price,” said Richard Miron, a spokesman for Robert Serry, the U.N.’s special coordinator for the Middle East peace process. He called the situation in Gaza “very fragile and unsustainable.”

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said, “we condemn in the strongest terms the rocket fire from Gaza by terrorists into southern Israel in recent days, which has dramatically and dangerously escalated in the past day. We call on those responsible to take immediate action to stop these cowardly acts.”

Israel released a number of video clips showing militants who were apparently hit by airstrikes moments before they were to fire rockets.

Remains of 167 people found in Mexican cave



AP

In this photo released by the Chiapas state Attorney General’s Office, human skulls and other bones that were found in a cave sit on a table at the Chiapas state attorney general’s office in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Mexico, Saturday March 10, 2012.

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexican authorities have found the remains of 167 people in a southern Mexican cave, and forensic experts believe the remains are at least 50 years old, according to a statement from Chiapas state prosecutors.

The statement released Saturday said the remains were found Friday on the Nuevo Ojo de Agua ranch in an area frequently

used by Central American migrants traveling north. The statement said there were no visible signs of violence on the remains, which “break easily.”

The statement said authorities will “not discard any line of investigation.”

The remains were discovered stacked atop each other in the cave, said a prosecutor’s office employee who was not

authorized to release information and asked not to be identified. The remains have been moved to the state capital of Tuxtla Gutierrez for examination, the employee said.

Mass graves have been found in the past two years mainly in northern Mexico containing the bodies of dozens of migrants and others allegedly killed by drug cartels.

WORLD BRIEFS

Yemen: US airstrikes kill 18 al-Qaida militants

SANA'A, Yemen (AP)—Yemeni military officials said Saturday that two U.S. airstrikes killed at least 18 al-Qaida-linked militants in an evening attack on a central province that had been partly overrun by the group earlier this year. U.S. Central Command spokesman, Army Maj. T.G. Taylor, declined to comment on any American role in the strikes. The U.S. considers the Yemen branch of al-Qaida one of its most dangerous. U.S. aircraft have targeted leaders of the branch in Yemen in the past, including an drone strike last year that killed American-born al-Qaida leader Anwar al-Awlaki. Residents in Bayda province, where the attack was carried out Friday evening, and a medical official there said 18 militants had been killed.

Bus station blasts in Kenya’s capital kill 4

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—A grenade attack at one of the main bus stations in Kenya’s capital killed at least four people and wounded 40 others Saturday, officials said, in the latest bloodshed blamed on sympathizers of Somalia’s al-Qaida-linked insurgency. Witnesses reported that people

in a moving car hurled three grenades at the outdoor terminal, police spokesman Charles Owino said. Government minister Esther Murugi, who spoke after visiting Nairobi’s main hospital where the wounded were brought, said six needed emergency surgery. Earlier, a Red Cross official said 12 people were in critical condition.

Thousands rally to show support for Hugo Chavez

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Thousands of supporters of Venezuela President Hugo Chavez held demonstrations across the country Saturday to show support for their leader while he recovers from cancer surgery in Cuba. Demonstrators danced, beat drums and waved flags as they marched through the Venezuelan capital. Crowds of Chavez supporters also held simultaneous rallies in other cities. In messages posted on Chavez’s Twitter account, the president cheered on the demonstrators. One message said: “Let’s go boys! Building the socialist homeland!” Another proclaimed: “I send all you my heart and my commitment to life and to Victory!” The president has said a Feb. 26 surgery in Cuba removed a tumor from the same location in the pelvic region where another tumor was removed in June.

Health & Fitness

US: More work needed to stop youth tobacco use

By MICHAEL FELBERBAUM
AP TOBACCO WRITER

RICHMOND, Va. (AP)—More work needs to be done to keep young Americans from using tobacco, including creating smoking bans and increasing taxes on tobacco products, the U.S. Surgeon General's office said in a report released Thursday.

Almost one in five high school-aged teens smokes, down from earlier decades, but the rate of decline has slowed, the report said.

It says it's particularly important to stop young people from using tobacco because those who start smoking as teenagers can increase their chances of long-term addiction. They also quickly can experience reduced lung function, impaired lung growth, early heart disease and other health problems like asthma.

More than 80 percent of smokers begin by age 18 and 99 percent of adult smokers in the U.S. start by age 26, according to the 920-page report, which is the first comprehensive look at youth tobacco use from the surgeon general's office in nearly two decades.

"In order to end this epidemic, we need to focus on where

we can prevent it and where we can see the most effect, and that's with young people," Surgeon General Regina Benjamin said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We want to make our next generation tobacco-free, and I think we can."

The report details youth tobacco use, health impacts, and tobacco marketing and prevention efforts in the U.S. Officials hope the information will reinvigorate anti-tobacco efforts and spark public activism in reducing death and disease caused by tobacco use.

The report also recommended anti-smoking campaigns and increased restrictions under the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's authority to regulate tobacco as other ways to prevent adolescents and young adults from using tobacco products.

Benjamin did not point fingers on why youth tobacco use continues in the U.S. Instead, she wants to see how the nation as a whole can best address the issue, she said.

"I don't want to focus on blame, I want to focus on prevention," she said. "I want to make sure we're doing everything that we can to prevent kids from ever starting to smoke or use tobacco products."

An ashtray full of cigarette butts is shown in Omaha, Neb., in this March 28, 2007 file photo.

The surgeon general's office last issued a report on youth tobacco use in 1994, the first wide-ranging report on the topic by federal health officials. The new report is the 31st issued by U.S. surgeons general to warn the public about tobacco's risks. The first report in 1964 declared tobacco to be deadly.

Since the 1994 report, smoking among high school students has declined from 27.5 percent to 19.5 percent, or about 3 million students, but the rate of de-

cline has slowed in recent years. About 5.2 percent, or 600,000 middle school students also are current smokers. According to the report, every day in the U.S., more than 3,800 people under the age of 18 smoke their first cigarette and more than 1,000 of them become daily smokers. They replace the 1,200 people who die each day in the U.S. from smoking.

"Too many of our children are addicted, too many cannot quit, and too many go on to die far

too young," Assistant Secretary for Health Howard Koh said at a Thursday news conference.

The report also examined advertising and promotional activities by tobacco companies, which have been shown to "cause the onset and continuation of smoking among adolescents and young adults."

Tobacco companies have spent increasing amounts of money on marketing efforts to reduce prices, which health officials said in the report could influence access to price-sensitive youth and make cigarettes more affordable.

"Far too many kids still see smoking images and messages every day that normalize this dependence," Koh said. "Kids see smoking in the movies they watch, the video games they play, the websites they visit and in the communities where they live."

Nearly \$10 billion was spent in 2008 on cigarette marketing by the nation's biggest tobacco companies, a 48 percent increase from what was spent in 1998, when some of the companies agreed with state attorneys general to curtail or stop some of their marketing efforts. That 25-year, \$206 billion settlement also pays states for smoking-

related health care costs and to support tobacco prevention and cessation programs.

"We have come a long way since the days of smoking on airplanes and in college classrooms, but we have a long way to go," Secretary of Health and Human Resources Kathleen Sebelius said in a statement accompanying the latest report. "The prosperity and health of our nation depend on it."

In a statement Thursday, Richmond, Va.-based Altria Group Inc., parent company of the nation's largest cigarette maker, Philip Morris USA, which makes the top-selling Marlboro brand, said it agrees that kids shouldn't use tobacco products and that it markets its products to adult tobacco users through age-verified direct communications and at retail stores.

"Underage tobacco use is a difficult issue, and there is not a simple solution," the company said. "We agree there's still more work to be done."

In concert with the report, the surgeon general's office is launching a contest for young people to submit videos on the report's findings that will ultimately chosen by the public to win cash prizes.

Out of bed! Hospitals aim to keep elderly strong

By LINDSEY TANNER
AP MEDICAL WRITER

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill. (AP)—Bob Landorf walked miles during his hospital stay, dragging his IV pole along, too, on a mission to upend disturbing statistics for patients his age.

At least one-third of hospital patients older than 70 leave more frail than when they arrived, and many become too weak to go home. Nursing home care or rehabilitation often are needed, and even then, research suggests more than two-thirds remain weaker a year after being in the hospital.

Elder-care experts challenge the idea that this decline is an inevitable part of growing old. They say conventional hospital care focusing on treating disease rather than preventing frailty contributes to the problem.

"Non-medical people say, 'Grandma went to the hospital with pneumonia ... and she was never the same again,'" said Dr. Kenneth Covinsky, a geriatrics specialist at University of California at San Francisco. "Pneumonia is a serious illness, but it is treatable" and should not leave patients disabled.

He and other advocates say hospitals need to revamp old-fashioned models of patient care to address the nation's aging population—from getting

patients out of bed to offering better food and homely surroundings.

"Life has 100 percent mortality. But if you can change the age at which people lose function," they may live longer, better lives, said Covinsky, who wrote about the issue recently in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Some already are heeding the call, including the suburban Chicago hospital where Landorf was recently treated.

Intestinal discomfort sent Landorf to Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights last month. Doctors put the 74-year-old part-time chemist on intravenous fluids and ran tests for a suspected blockage. But they didn't confine him to bed.

Two hospital units have volunteers who accompany patients on daily walking sessions of at least 15 minutes, their course marked by footprint decals on hallway walls. Landorf figures he did at least 20 laps daily during his stay.

His only complaint? "It would be nice if they had longer paths," he said.

Doctors found no intestinal blockage and sent him home af-

ter three days. Now he's back to working out three times a week, just like before his hospital stay.

Landorf thinks all that walking helped keep him in shape. The benefit is obvious, he said. "Any kind of exercise you can get when you're bedridden is good."

Days of bed rest raise chances for infection, can slow recovery from common conditions in the elderly including pneumonia, and contribute to surprisingly rapid loss of muscle strength in older patients.

Dina Lipowich, Northwest's head of nursing and geriatrics, said the hospital is evaluating whether the walking program has reduced those risks.

"We want to preserve their independence," Lipowich said. "Gone are the days when we needed to stay in bed to get better."

Other hospitals, like Highlands Hospital in Birmingham, Ala., are changing standard mealtime practices to keep patients from losing weight. Busy staff may overlook whether patients eat, said Dr. Kellie Flood, medical director of a special elder-care unit at Highlands, operated by the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

One impediment is plas-

tic wrapping the food, often a challenge for an older person's arthritic hands. Flood has enlisted college students to help remove the wrappers. Volunteers sometimes help feed patients, spending time with them during meals, making conversation that often helps lonely older people feel more like eating, Flood said.

The program is modeled after one at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, and Flood is evaluating whether the Alabama program has improved patients' function or shortened hospital stays.

She called it "one tiny piece" of maintaining baseline functioning.

The elder-care units where such efforts occur are one of the best-known models of geriatric hospital care, typically featuring specialists, nurses, physical therapists and other staffers who collaborate to keep older patients from becoming frail.

Often there is carpeting, special lighting or curtains to make older patients feel more at home. But the concept also involves challenging standard practices, from bed rest and feeding methods to routine use of things like urinary catheters that can increase risk of infection and which studies have shown are often needlessly used in older patients.

Personal Trainer

Burning calories with a bike

Bicycling consumes more calories if you go faster or ride longer, and a heavy rider expends calories faster than a light one.



Average speed, in mph (kph)
Flat road, no wind, upright riding position

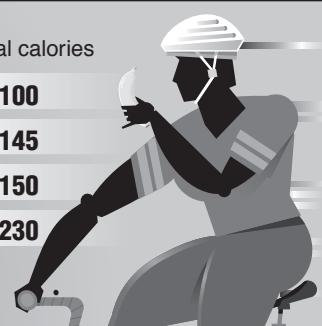
| Rider's weight in lb. (kg) | 12 (19) | 14 (23) | 15 (24) | 16 (26) | 17 (27) | 18 (29) | 19 (31) |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 110 (50) | 290 | 350 | 400 | 450 | 500 | 590 | 660 |
| 120 (54) | 320 | 380 | 440 | 480 | 550 | 630 | 720 |
| 130 (59) | 340 | 400 | 470 | 520 | 590 | 690 | 770 |
| 140 (64) | 360 | 430 | 500 | 560 | 630 | 730 | 830 |
| 150 (68) | 380 | 460 | 530 | 590 | 680 | 780 | 880 |
| 160 (73) | 400 | 490 | 570 | 530 | 720 | 830 | 940 |
| 170 (77) | 430 | 510 | 600 | 670 | 760 | 880 | 990 |
| 180 (82) | 450 | 540 | 630 | 700 | 800 | 930 | 1050 |
| 190 (86) | 470 | 570 | 660 | 740 | 840 | 970 | 1100 |
| 200 (91) | 500 | 600 | 700 | 770 | 880 | 1020 | 1160 |

What is that in food? Typical calories

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1 banana | 100 |
| 1 oz. (28 g) chocolate bar | 145 |
| 1 beer | 150 |
| 1 fruit yogurt | 230 |

Source: Bicycling,
U.S. Agriculture Department
Graphic: Paul Trap

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Life & Style

Treasure worth billions found in Indian temple's secret chambers

By SUNRITA SEN
MCT

NEW DELHI— Precious stones, jewelry, gold and silver estimated to be worth several billion dollars have been found in the secret underground vaults of an ancient temple in southern India, a temple official said Saturday.

An 18-foot-long necklace, 536 kilograms (1,179.2 pounds) of 18th century

gold coins, diamond-studded plates, rubies and emeralds were found in the vaults of the Sri Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala state, the Hindustan Times reported.

The vaults were opened after the Supreme Court ordered the state government to take over the temple's assets from a trust controlled by the royal family of Travancore.

A seven-member, court-ap-

pointed panel is conducting an inventory of the vaults.

The temple has six underground chambers, of which two are opened daily, and two twice a year. The two chambers opened on Thursday and Friday were last looked at about 130 years ago, the temple's executive officer VK Harikumar said.

The treasure recovered so far could be worth 500 billion rupees (\$11 billion), the Hin-

dustan Times quoted sources as saying.

But Harikumar said the estimates being discussed were imaginary, and that the valuation of the rare gems would be done by experts who would submit a report to the Supreme Court.

Some experts have questioned the quick estimates, saying it would take several weeks to make an assessment. "Antique value cannot be fixed overnight," PJ Cherian, director of the Kerala Council for Historical Research, was quoted as saying.

The inspections at the temple began after the Supreme Court endorsed a Kerala High Court order asking the state government to take over the temple and its assets.



The High Court order was given after a local lawyer, Sundar Rajan, filed a petition saying the temple should be taken over as the trust running it did not have the capacity to ensure adequate security for the temple's assets.

The Sri Padmanabhaswamy temple was built in the 16th century by the kings of Travancore. The descendants of the royal family had appealed to the Supreme Court against the petition for the takeover.

Princely states in India merged with the Indian republic after the country gained independence from British rule in 1947. Initially, the princes were allowed to retain their titles and some property, and were given funds in lieu of the revenue they earlier earned. But the funds and their titles were abolished by the government in 1971.

The descendants of the Travancore royal family, however, continued to control the Sri Padmanabhaswamy temple through the trust.

Artist Heizer's big rock rolls to Calif. museum



In this June 9, 2011 file photo, Stephen Vander Hart, co-owner and vice president of Stone Valley Materials, walks past a 340-ton boulder from his quarry in Riverside, Calif. AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Rock stars are a common enough sight in Los Angeles but it's not often when a rock is the star.

Los Angeles residents are coming out to catch a glimpse of a massive boulder that arrived at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art before dawn Saturday, after lumbering across Southern California for the past week and a half.

It will become the centerpiece of acclaimed earth artist Michael Heizer's latest creation, "Levitated Mass."

"The sheer size of it is just impressive. The size of the rock, and the size of the undertaking," said Ron Dickson, 64, who drove down from Burbank.

The 340-ton hunk of granite, accompanied by an entourage of about 100 people, left a dusty quarry in Riverside on Feb. 28, chauffeured toward its destination

by a specially built carrier as long as a football field.

The convoy made it to Wilshire Boulevard at around 4 a.m. Saturday, with hundreds of people looking on and museum officials updating its progress on Twitter.

In its final mile, the moving crew paused to pose for photos in front of LACMA's "Urban Light" exhibit, before turning north on Fairfax Avenue, then east on West Sixth Street to its permanent home on the museum's north lawn.

Miranda Carroll, LACMA's communications director, described a collective sigh of relief among museum officials when the megalith finally arrived.

"It's here!" cheered Carroll, who admitted she didn't get much sleep as she followed the journey's last stretch.

As the sun came up, the sidewalks along the lawn were filled

gawkers clutching coffee cups peering through a chain link fence. Five-year-old Ariel, who lives a block away, snapped photos with a digital camera.

"We wanted to see what the fuss was all about," Ariel's mom, Julieanne, said. "But not enough that we wanted to come in the middle of the night."

As it made a long, circuitous journey toward the museum that was aimed at avoiding narrow streets, low-slung bridges and pesky utility lines, it was cheered on by what became an audience of tens of thousands.

At one stop a man proposed to his girlfriend in front of the rock. Later, when it arrived in Long Beach, that city threw a block party that attracted thousands of revelers.

There were a couple of small bumps along the way, however.

Because of its size, the rock

could only be moved late at night and in the early morning, stopping each day at pre-arranged locations.

Two days into its journey it had to pull up two miles short of its destination when a transmission in the engine of the vehicle pulling it became balky. It was parked partially in the roadway of a highway just down the street from a freeway entrance in Diamond Bar, giving passing motorists an exceptionally good view of it.

It got back on schedule the following day, but as it navigated its way through South Los Angeles earlier this week, movers discovered two unaccounted for palm trees blocking its path. They cut them down and proceeded on, promising the community they would eventually return to replace them. In the last few blocks, several parked cars had to be towed

to allow the carrier to make the final turns, according to Carroll.

At the museum, the rock is to be placed over a 465-foot-long trench, where Heizer has promised that visitors who walk underneath will experience the illusion that it is floating above them.

The artist, noted for mammoth-scale works in which the earth itself becomes his palette, is

Popular romance trilogy gets US publisher

NEW YORK (AP)—E.L. James' "Fifty Shades of Grey" trilogy, a word-of-mouth romance smash so erotic it's sometimes labeled "mommy porn," has been signed up by a paperback division of Random House Inc.

Vintage Books announced Saturday that it had acquired the three books—"Fifty Shades of Grey," "Fifty Shades Darker" and "Fifty Shades Freed." E-book editions will be out Monday and paperbacks are expected in early April.

The novels had been distributed by an Australia-based publisher, the Writer's Coffee Shop Publishing House. The trilogy follows the romance between a young billionaire, Christian Grey, and a college student, Anastasia Steele. It has sold more than 250,000 copies, and on Saturday, the first volume was No. 1 on both Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.

"'Fifty' has taken me on an extraordinary and wholly unexpected adventure, and I'm thrilled to be continuing it with Vintage," James, a former television executive based in London, said in a statement issued Saturday by Vintage. "I've heard from so many readers trying to find these books in their local bookshops and libraries. It is gratifying to know that they will soon become widely available in the U.S. and around the world."

James' trilogy began as fan fiction, a thriving genre online in which fans write variations of their favorite books and

perhaps best known for "City," a Mount Rushmore-sized creation he has been building near his home in the Nevada desert for decades. He has kept most people from seeing it, but photos that have surfaced show a number of huge, pyramid-like buildings, some as high as 80 feet, stretching across more than a mile of desert terrain.

The books' success has set off a strong debate online. On a chat room for NBC's "Today" show, which ran a segment on the trilogy earlier this month, several negative messages were posted, saying it was wrong for readers to pay for a trilogy originally available for free and that Christian and Anastasia were stand-ins for Edward and Bella.

In an email Saturday, romance author and blogger Sarah Wendell said similarities to "Twilight" included "the hero's 'long hands,'" the "klutzy heroine with auburn hair" and the narrative being "told from the heroine's very deep first-person point of view."

"The themes of 'Twilight' are very much repeated," she added, "innocent heroine, dark, emotionally unavailable hero with a secret, isolation of the heroine from the rest of the world while with the hero, and the hero's overwhelming ability to care for and provide for the heroine with limitless wealth. It's a wealth fantasy as well as an erotic fantasy."

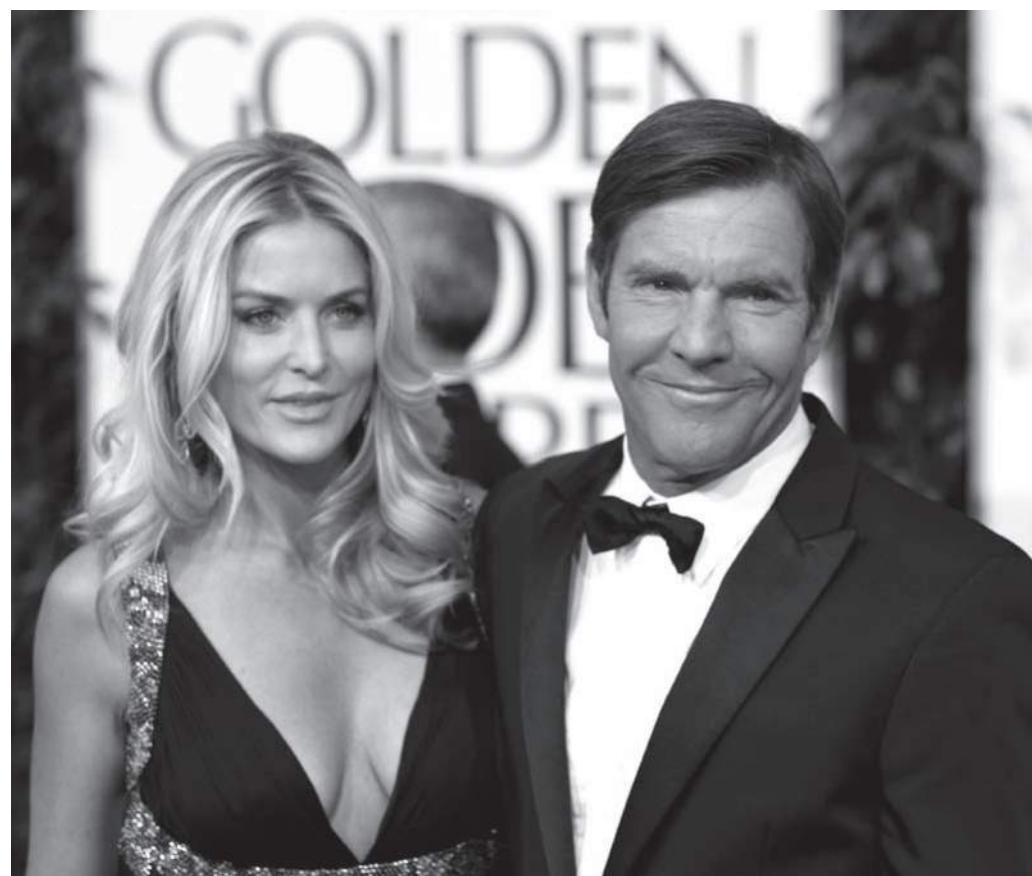
Dennis Quaid's 3rd wife files for divorce in Texas

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Actor Dennis Quaid's third wife has filed for divorce, saying the couple's seven-year marriage has "become insupportable because of discord or conflict of personalities."

Kimberly Buffington Quaid filed a petition in Travis County, Texas, using the initials "B.K." and identifying Quaid as "W.D." William is Quaid's middle name, and two of the addresses in temporary orders issued as part of the case match up to those listed as among the Austin residences for Buffington Quaid.

There are also references to two children born in 2007, when the couple's twins, Zoe and Thomas, were born. The papers were filed March 2. Word of them was first reported Friday by TMZ.

Lisa Kasteler and Cara Tripicchio of WKT Public Relations issued a statement on behalf of Quaid saying, "we can confirm that Kimberley Quaid has filed for divorce."



In this Jan. 16, 2011 file photo, actor Dennis Quaid and his wife Kimberly Buffington Quaid arrive for the Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif. AP

Oprah and Jaycee Dugard honored at the DVF Awards

NEW YORK (AP)—Oprah Winfrey was embraced in a hug by longtime friend Diane von Furstenberg as she took to the stage to accept a "Lifetime Leadership" honor at the third annual DVF awards.

"She is the most formidable person I have ever met in my life," the designer and humanitarian said of Winfrey at the event, held Friday night at the United Nations. "What is extraordinary about Oprah is that she has done so much and yet she is still a little girl. She is still very pure and you can make her cry and laugh so quickly."

Upon accepting the award, Winfrey was expected to talk about her career, but instead used the majority of her time to praise another honoree, Jaycee Dugard, who was abducted when she was 11 years old and held in captivity for 18 years by Phillip and Nancy Garrido. She was raped and gave birth to two children before she was eventually rescued. Her captors were convicted.

"I wanted to have the opportunity to meet her and to tell her how much her story and her life meant to me," she explained. "I said to Diane, 'I know Diane Sawyer should be the one to introduce her, but would you please let me do it?'" Winfrey went on to thank Sawyer, who was also in attendance, and



Oprah Winfrey presents Jaycee Dugard with a DVF Award at The Third Annual DVF Awards held at the United Nations in New York, Friday, March 9, 2012. AP

praised the television special she did with Dugard.

"Jaycee Dugard, I am so proud of you, your courage, your ability to press onward toward the future and toward a more victorious life for yourself and for using your courage your strength and your power to show the world that you care," Winfrey said.

Following Winfrey's introduction, Dugard took to the stage, getting emotional as she thanked her mother for never

giving up hope of finding her. She also spoke about her JAYC Foundation, which aims to give support to families dealing with abduction and other tragedies.

"My hope is to be remembered for what I do and not for what happened to me," Dugard told the audience.

Earlier in the evening, presenter Jessica Alba showed off an acorn necklace she was given by Dugard. The necklace represents Dugard's charity.

The DVF awards honor

women who are courageous and fight for justice. Artist Pamela Castro, who battles against domestic violence; Chouchou Namegabe, who fights for women's issues in her native Congo; and Layli Miller-Muro who founded the Tahirih Justice Center, which protects women from human rights abuses, were also honored.

The awards were part of the festivities surrounding the Women In the World conference.

of VEVO—in its focus on videos and live performance—to a young MTV. VEVO is currently piped to TVs via Boxee and Google TV, but Cerda said VEVO will soon be connected to "other connected devices" like the Nintendo Wii and PlayStation.

Cerda also said VEVO is planning to do "a lot" to migrate to TV screens, a prospect that will likely further comparisons

comment on those reports.

Cerda said the new VEVO was designed to transition the site from a "snackable" website to "a personalized, social and long form experience."

In January, VEVO had about 717 million streams, according to ComScore.

"Contrary to what has been reported, a satisfactory settlement is being worked out for both parties," the statement said, adding that no more information would be provided "on this private matter."

Court documents show Buffington Quaid is seeking spousal support and attorney fees. They say she believes the couple will enter into a written agreement providing for "possession of, access to and support of" the twins.

According to a temporary order regarding the twins agreed upon by both parties on March 2, Buffington Quaid will be allowed to use a home in Austin and a Mercedes, while Quaid remains at another local residence with a Cadillac Escalade. The couple was to share a Range Rover already in Buffington Quaid's possession.

The twins were newborns when they nearly died in 2007. While at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, they were accidentally given

an overdose of the blood thinner heparin. Quaid and his wife became the very public faces of the harrowing family ordeal.

"There were 41 hours where their lives were in the balance," Quaid told The Associated Press in 2010. He added that it was the most frightening day of his life and left him and his wife in "shock, anger and confusion."

Quaid produced and narrated a documentary about medical mistakes called "Chasing Zero: Winning the War on Healthcare Harm" for the Discovery Channel. Documents that became public afterward show Quaid and his wife agreed to a \$500,000 settlement with the hospital.

Buffington-Quaid was a real estate agent in Austin when she met Quaid.

The 57-year-old Quaid is a Houston native. He married actress P.J. Soles in November 1978 and the couple divorced in 1983. He married another actress, Meg Ryan, in 1991, before they divorced in 2001.

Fistfight breaks out at Chicago Symphony Orchestra

CHICAGO (AP)—It was an unusual backdrop for a fistfight: Maestro Riccardo Muti was nearly through the second movement of Brahms Symphony No. 2 at the normally staid Chicago Symphony Orchestra when two patrons got into a fistfight.

Concert-goers at Orchestra Hall were all the more stunned Thursday because the two men were fighting in one of the boxes where the well-to-do normally sit in decorous self-restraint.

The Chicago Sun-Times reported Saturday that the ruckus began when a man in his 30s started punching a 67-year-old man in one of the boxes.

"We heard a rather loud thump," said Steve Robinson, general manager of Chicago's classical and folk music station 98.7 WFMT, who was at the

performance but didn't see the fracas. "It wasn't so loud that everyone jumped up and ran for the exits."

Police said the fight was the result of an argument over seats. The older man had a cut on his forehead; the other left before officers arrived.

All the while, the concert went on. Though patrons said Music Director Muti gave the two men a sharp, irritated look—one person called it "dagger eyes"—before continuing on with the third movement.

"Mind you, he never stopped conducting," Robinson said. "He very gracefully, without missing a beat—literally—he brought (the second movement) to a very quiet and subdued close, while still looking over his left shoulder."

Prosecutor: Many threats before Hudson killings

CHICAGO (AP)—The man accused of killing Oscar winner Jennifer Hudson's mother, brother and 7-year-old nephew had threatened to kill members of the family at least two dozen times before the October 2008 slayings, a prosecutor said during a Friday hearing in Chicago.

Assistant State's Attorney James McKay said the threats began in February 2008, when James Balfour moved out of the family's house, where he had been living with his wife, Hudson's sister Julia. The threats continued until the day the bodies were found, on Oct. 24, 2008.

"He said, 'If you ever leave me, I'm going to kill you, but I'm going to kill your family first,'" McKay said at the hearing. "'You will be the last to die.'"



Hudson

shot the family members because he was furious his wife was dating another man. Balfour has pleaded not guilty.

The hearing came about a month before Balfour is scheduled to stand trial.

The killings in one of Chicago's most dangerous neighborhoods made international headlines when the bodies of Hudson's mother and brother were found in the family's home and the boy's body was discovered in an SUV days later.

Jennifer Hudson, who won an Academy Award for best supporting actress in 2007 for her role in "Dreamgirls," was in Chicago with her family about five days before the killings. She told investigators she'd known Balfour since childhood and had advised her sister against marrying him.

VEVO launches redesign with Facebook in mind

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—With TV screens and social networking in mind, the music video site VEVO has launched a significant redesign.

The new VEVO features a bigger player, continuous playback of videos and personalized playlists synced with user iTunes libraries and Facebook pages.

VEVO, which is co-owned by Sony Music and Universal Music, debuted the new design Friday.

The Facebook integration will likely further stoke rumors that the social network is interested in purchasing VEVO. Michael Cerda, senior vice president of product at VEVO, declined to

comment on those reports.

Cerda said the new VEVO was designed to transition the site from a "snackable" website to "a personalized, social and long form experience."

Cerda also said VEVO is planning to do "a lot" to migrate to TV screens, a prospect that will likely further comparisons

Taylor Swift is Billboard's top money maker in 2011



AP
US singer Taylor Swift performs on stage at the Burswood Dome during the opening night of her 'Speak Now' Australian tour in Perth, Australia, Friday, March 2, 2012.

Dick Van Dyke marries makeup artist at age 86

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Dick Van Dyke is a very happy newlywed at age 86, his spokesman said Friday.

Van Dyke and makeup artist Arlene Silver, 40, were married last week in a small Leap Day ceremony at a Malibu chapel near the actor's home, publicist Bob Palmer said.

"I've never seen him happier. She adds a lot to his life," he said, adding that the couple has much in common, including a love of singing.

Members of Silver's family and some of Van Dyke's close friends were on hand for the intimate wedding. Van Dyke suggested the couple may hold a bigger ceremony in the future, Palmer said.

Silver and the stage, film and TV star became friends about five years ago after meeting at the Screen Actors Guild Awards, Palmer said Friday.

Michelle Triola Marvin, Van Dyke's partner of 30 years, died in October 2009 at age 76.

Van Dyke gained fame in the musical "Bye Bye Birdie," for which he won a Tony Award in 1961, and starred in the 1963 film based on the play. His other movie credits include "Mary Poppins" and "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang."

The 1961-66 "The Dick Van Dyke Show" made him a TV star, and he's proved an enduring one: His other series include "Diagnosis Murder" (1993-2002) and made-for-TV movies such as 2008's "Murder 101: New Age."

Van Dyke, who had a long-time marriage that ended in divorce, has four children.

NEW YORK (AP)—Taylor Swift is No. 1 again: The singer is the top act on Billboard's "Money Makers" list.

Swift earned more than \$35 million in 2011, according to the Billboard list released Friday. U2 was second with \$32 million. Kenny Chesney, Lady Gaga and Lil Wayne rounded out the top 5.

Artists' rankings were based on U.S. income sources from tours, albums sales and publishing royalties. Billboard said in a press release that it didn't factor in "sponsorships, merchandise sales or synchronization deals."

Adele was tenth on the list. Though she canceled most of her U.S. tour due to issues with her vocal cords, her album "21" sold more than 5 million units in 2011. Including sales from this year, "21" has sold nearly 8 million copies.

Judean coin brings \$1 million at NY auction

NEW YORK (AP)—An ancient Judean coin has sold for \$1.1 million at a New York City auction.

The Year 1 prototype silver shekel from A.D. 66 was bought Thursday night at Heritage Auctions by a private East Coast collector.

It's one of only two known Year 1 prototype silver shekels. The other one is in the collection of the Israel Museum.

It's the first silver coin struck by Jewish forces revolting against Roman rule in the first century. It features an image of a ritual chalice and three pomegranates.

Heritage says it's the highest price for any Judean coin paid at auction.

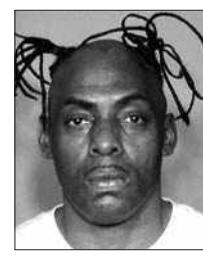


This undated file photo provided by Heritage Auctions shows the front of a Year 1 prototype silver shekel.

It's one of 2,200 ancient Judean coins from the Shoshana Collection assembled by a private Los Angeles-area collector. He bought it at a 1991 auction for more than \$240,000.

Rapper Coolio arrested in unpaid Vegas ticket case

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Rapper Coolio was arrested Friday on a warrant charging him with failure to appear in court on a traffic ticket almost two years ago.



Coolio, 48, whose real name is Artis Leon Ivey Jr., was a passenger in a vehicle officers

stopped about 2:20 a.m. several blocks east of the Las Vegas Strip, Officer Laura Meltzer said.

No one else in the car was arrested.

It was not immediately clear if Ivey had a lawyer. His manager Susan Haber said she had

not heard about the incident

and had no comment.

Ivey was sought on a warrant charging him with failure to appear on an illegal stop and driving without a license summons issued in June 2010.

He was freed later in the day. A court date wasn't immediately known.

Coolio is a musician, actor and record producer best known for the song "Gangsta's Paradise."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Ray J says he's 'still hurting' over Houston death

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ray J says he's "still hurting" nearly a month after the death of Whitney Houston. The singer and sometime reality television star was one of the people who spent time with Houston in her last days. He told reporters at a charity event on Friday in Los Angeles: "I really miss my friend, you know. I really do. I'm still hurting." "I'm able to look at life in a whole different way," Ray J said. He looked down at a smartphone and said, "I always look at my phone because I've got a picture of somebody that I really love and it helps me through the day." Ray J, who was joined by his parents Sonja and Willie Norwood, did not take questions from reporters. Houston died in a hotel suite in Beverly Hills, California, on Feb. 11.

'Kill Bill' actor Michael Madsen jailed in Malibu

MALIBU, Calif. (AP)—Authorities say actor Michael Madsen has been arrested for investigation of cruelty to a child after a fight with his teenage son. A Los Angeles County sheriff's statement says Madsen was arrested Friday afternoon at his home in Malibu, after deputies were called about a family disturbance. The statement says detectives from the Special Victims Bureau are investigating allegations that Madsen was under the influence of alcohol and fought with his son, who did not need medical attention. Madsen was arrested without incident and booked at the Lost Hills sheriff's station. He is being held on \$100,000 bail. The 54-year-old Madsen is known for the Quentin Tarantino movies "Reservoir

Dogs" and "Kill Bill."

Juanes attends his first Bruce Springsteen concert

While Latin sensation Juanes attended his first Bruce Springsteen concert at the Apollo Theater, he says he has always felt connected to Springsteen's music. The Grammy-winning artist said he admires how Springsteen combines "his energy on stage with the political nature of his music." He said much of South America appreciates Springsteen's working-class anthems and feels a connection to them. The Colombian-born artist will open for "The Boss" next week in Austin, Texas, at the SXSW Festival. He said it will be a great moment for him and he is "very excited" to have the opportunity. Friday's concert in Harlem celebrated the 10th anniversary of Sirius XM Radio. Springsteen kicks off his "Wrecking Ball" World Tour on March 18 in Atlanta. (AP)

Schwarzenegger's son injured in Idaho ski accident

SUN VALLEY, Idaho (AP)—The 18-year-old son of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Maria Shriver says he has been treated for injuries after getting in "a little ski accident" in Idaho. Patrick Schwarzenegger tweeted Saturday that he received stitches "down the back and but" (sic) after the accident, and he also thanked doctors who he said cared for him in Sun Valley. He provided a link to a photo he posted to the social networking application Instagram, showing a deep cut on his lower back. He also said that he had been bruised in the accident, but did not provide details on how he got injured. In 2006, Arnold Schwarzenegger broke his leg in a ski accident at Sun Valley while he was governor of California.

On or off your cellphone, keep your volume low

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I frequently talk on my cellphone in public, and I'm often irked by the comments I get from people to put my phone away. Personally, I don't see a difference between a cellphone conversation and an in-person conversation, provided I keep the noise level down. It's not like I'm talking about excessively personal subjects or anything.

I spend an hour on the train going to and coming from work, and I like to use that time to catch up with my friends. Am I wrong for constantly talking on my cellphone in public, or do people just need to get used to the era of mobile phones?

ON THE LINE IN PALO ALTO, CALIF.

DEAR ON THE LINE: It may not be what you're doing, but rather how you're doing it. If people "often" tell you to put away your cellphone during your commute, then I have news for you: You're talking too loudly. Also, those seated around you may not want to overhear the details of your social life. A root canal can be more pleasant than hearing someone drone on for 30, 45, 60 minutes straight. So be mindful of your surroundings and considerate of others. Whether you're having an in-person conversation or talking on a cellphone, the rules should be the same.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have a friend, "Dara," who is a single mom. From time to time she has watched my kids while my husband and I have traveled on business. For this reason I have given her our garage door combination. Now, every time she visits, she uses our garage code and walks in through our back door. She drops off items for us and lets herself in when we're not home, then texts me afterward about "how happy the dog was" to see her or tell me to look for something she dropped off.

I have told Dara she scares me and my kids when she comes in unexpectedly. We expect her to ring the doorbell like a normal guest. I have made light jokes, but she hasn't picked up on them. What she's doing is rude, and I don't understand how she can be so comfortable doing it. Do you have any advice for me?

INTRUDED UPON IN WISCONSIN

DEAR INTRUDED UPON: Obviously, making "light jokes" about Dara's intrusive behavior hasn't been enough to get your message across. That's why the next time she walks in on you, you should tell her plainly, directly and in all seriousness that you expect her to ring the doorbell when she visits, and to refrain from coming into your home in your absence unless she has been specifically requested to do so. And if it happens again, change the code on your garage door.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I live in a small town, so we invariably run into someone we know when we're eating out at a restaurant. If we run into people we know who have already been served a portion of their meal (an appetizer, salad or main course), we briefly say hello and then "... we won't interrupt your dinner."

What do we say when we're trying to eat and friends continue to come to talk to us throughout our meal?

PREFERS TO EAT IN PEACE

DEAR PREFERS TO EAT IN PEACE: Smile warmly and say, "We're going to keep eating because we like our food hot. We hope you don't mind."

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



Dear Abby

Manning watch moves to desert, but no sign of QB

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP)—The Peyton Manning stakeout moved to Arizona on Saturday, even though there was no sign of the superstar in the desert.

Manning spent nearly six hours at the Denver Broncos' facility on Friday, and speculation was high that the Cardinals would be his next stop. The Arizona Republic reported that the four-time MVP arrived Saturday night.

The Cardinals' facility was a beehive of activity as the setting for Kurt Warner's annual "Ultimate Football Experience," a fundraiser for his First Things First foundation that features current and past football stars. Among them was Cardinals star wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald, who said he knew nothing of any contact the team may have made with Manning.

"I haven't heard anything," he said. "I'd like to feel like if he was going to be here I would probably hear something from somebody."

The presence of Fitzgerald, one of the best receivers in the game, is considered a major reason Manning would consider the Cardinals, who finished last season 7-2 after a 1-6 start to wind up 8-8.

The team has already invested millions in quarterback Kevin Kolb and is scheduled to pay him \$7 million if he is on the roster Thursday. The Cardinals, though, had more success with second-year quarterback John Skelton starting than with Kolb, who missed much of the season with turf toe and a concussion.

Fitzgerald, the Cardinals' career leading receiver, said he understood why Arizona would be interested in Manning.

"He's a four-time MVP. He's a Super Bowl champion," he said. "He's arguably the best quarterback to ever play football. He's a free agent. If he's

WASHINGTON (AP)—Redskins receiver Anthony Armstrong, who hopes to be catching passes soon from Robert Griffin III, tweeted that "Stock in Superman socks just sky rocketed."

Especially if someone can make them in burgundy and gold.

More pertinent was the reaction from someone who figures to be blocking for the Heisman Trophy winner from Baylor.

"The search is over, I guess," guard Kory Lichtensteiger said.

If it is, it took long enough. And it certainly cost a lot. But if Griffin can solidify the quarterback position for the next decade and lift the Redskins out of their long funk, it undoubtedly will have been worth the price.

"We understand it was a heavy price but when you bought your home you probably wanted to pay a little less too," Washington general manager Bruce Allen said Saturday. "But you like your home once you live in it."



"Thank You Peyton" banner is placed on top of Peyton Manning photo in front of the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Saturday, March 10, 2012.

healthy, I know he's somebody that can help any team that he goes to. I understand the interest. It makes sense."

Fitzgerald said he wasn't surprised Arizona is in the mix.

"After last year, Michael (team President Michael Bidwill) said he was going to continue staying aggressive," Fitzgerald said, "and he's going

to do everything he can to make sure we're going to be able to compete for an NFC West championship every single year. He hasn't done anything to this point to make us believe anything different."

Besides Fitzgerald, the Cardinals can offer a state-of-the-art stadium with a retractable roof and natural grass field that slides

out into the sunshine when not being used. Then there is the weather—sunshine with the temperature in the high 70s on Saturday.

The Cardinals have a strong young defense but Manning might be concerned with an inconsistent offensive line that could lose left tackle Levi Brown, unless he restructures

his contract. Other than Fitzgerald, the receivers are young.

Warner, who led St. Louis and Arizona to the Super Bowl, said he's a bit surprised the Cardinals are in the running, mainly because of the investment they have made in Kolb, who was acquired from the Philadelphia Eagles for cornerback Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie and a second-round draft pick.

"But I think that speaks volumes about where the organization is at right now," Warner said, "how far they've come, in saying 'Hey, we want to win. No offense to the guys that we have, but if we feel like we can upgrade a position and we can be better, we're going to make a play at that. You have to commend an organization for doing that."

Warner, now an analyst for the NFL Network, does not see the Cardinals as favorites in the Manning sweepstakes.

"I think Miami still has the upper hand," he said. "I don't necessarily know why I think that. I just think since day one they've made it known 'We want him to be our guy and we'll do whatever we have to do to get him.' I think if you're a guy in that situation, at that stage of your career, that's what you want to hear. You want to go somewhere where they're saying 'We're going to roll out the red carpet. Whatever you need we're willing to make those moves, bring a receiver with you, sign you to whatever kind of deal you want.'"

Manning became one of the most sought after free agents ever when he was released by the Indianapolis Colts, the first move in a massive roster makeover for the team that had the worst record in the NFL last season, when their star quarterback was injured. The Colts dumped Manning and prepared to take Andrew Luck with the first pick in the draft.

After an emotional farewell in Indianapolis, Manning has

swiftly moved to find a new home, reportedly with a Tuesday deadline. After a series of neck surgeries, he has reported good progress in regenerating the nerves and regaining his masterful passing ability.

He got a high-profile welcome in Denver.

According to The Denver Post, the Broncos sent a plane to pick up Manning in South Florida, where he has a condo. He had traveled there after an emotional news conference in Indianapolis on Wednesday, when he said goodbye to the team that drafted him No. 1 overall in 1998 and he led to the 2007 Super Bowl championship.

The plane then stopped in Stillwater, Okla., where Broncos vice president of football operations and Hall of Fame quarterback John Elway, coach John Fox and general manager Brian Xanders were watching Oklahoma State's pro day. The Broncos management met up with Manning, and everyone flew back to Denver.

ESPN carried live coverage of the flight arriving at an airport in Denver, then also followed Manning's car ride to Broncos headquarters. And while Manning met with Elway & Co. inside the building, a blue helicopter hovered overhead.

Just where he was on Saturday was a mystery, with the Cardinals staying silent about anything to do with Manning. The Kansas City Chiefs also have expressed interest, but there was no known scheduled visit there.

"There's excitement around our league, and excitement about what we're going to see from Peyton Manning, where he's going to go, if he's going to make a team an instant competitor for a championship," Warner said. "All those things are great for our league. I'm excited to see, just like everyone else, how this plays out."

but the odds were stacked from the start against the former Indianapolis Colts quarterback coming to Washington. The offense needs upgrades at receiver and along the offensive line—too much rebuilding for someone about to turn 36—and Manning would have had to face brother Eli Manning of the New York Giants twice a year in the NFC East.

The Rams were eager sellers given they already have a franchise quarterback in Sam Bradford, the No. 1 overall pick in 2010, and are needy at most other positions after going 10-38 the last three seasons. Rather than drag out the intrigue, they maximized their haul by capitalizing on competition and signed off on a deal more than six weeks ahead of the draft.

The player most often mentioned as the Rams' potential pick at No. 2 was Oklahoma State wide receiver Justin Blackmon, but he could also be available at No. 6.

Redskins QB 'search is over' after trade with Rams

The Redskins and St. Louis Rams have a deal in place for Washington to move into the No. 2 overall spot in next month's NFL draft. The Redskins will give up a breathtaking three first-round selections —this year's No. 6 overall, plus first-rounders in 2013 and 2014 —plus a second-round pick this year in the swap, which must be approved by the NFL and can't be completed under league rules until the free agency period begins Tuesday.

Details of the trade emerged Friday night, and Rams chief operating officer Kevin Demoff confirmed it Saturday.

It allows the Redskins to leapfrog all other teams that had an interest in Griffin, especially the quarterback-needy Cleveland Browns. The Indianapolis Colts are expected to take Andrew Luck with the No. 1 choice.

It's a bold—some would say desperate—move by a team that has been repeatedly frustrated in its search for a franchise quarterback. The Redskins have started 21 quarterbacks over the last 19 seasons, with only three playoff appearances to show for it.

"It's been tough and I feel for our fans and in many times we haven't been successful and we're trying to get it right," Allen said, "and I think we had a big step to get it right."

They have finished in last place in the NFC East for four years running, leading to a slow erosion of a fan base long known as one of the most passionate in the NFL. Owner Dan Snyder downsized the stadium last year, removing some 10,000 seats, but Griffin has the personality and the talent to re-energize the faithful.

In case there was any doubt,

just visit Waco, Texas, where Griffin revived a Baylor team that never had a winning season in the Big 12 before he arrived on campus four years ago. He led the Bears last year to their first bowl win since 1992—coincidentally, also the year that began with the Redskins winning their last Super Bowl—and had a hard time saying goodbye when he left with one year of eligibility remaining and a master's degree nearly completed.

"He's just matchless in terms of the combination of goodness of character, greatness of skill and his commitment to his university and his teammates," Baylor President Ken Starr said at Griffin's farewell news conference in January. "The nation has found Robert to be this very endearing and, as someone said, he's the most interesting person in perhaps all of athletics, but

interesting in a positive sense."

Interesting? Yep. Griffin wore purple Barney socks that day, a change of theme from the Superman socks he wore at the Heisman ceremony in December.

In Washington, he would work under Mike Shanahan, whose legacy is on the line. Shanahan has won only one playoff game since John Elway retired after capturing the second of back-to-back Super Bowls with the Denver Broncos in 1998, and he hasn't been to the playoffs in his last five seasons as a coach.

Shanahan has already misfired on three quarterbacks in his two seasons in Washington, with Donovan McNabb, Rex Grossman and John Beck producing an 11-21 record.

The Redskins were among the teams hoping to be in the running for Peyton Manning,

Wade beats buzzer, lifts Heat past Pacers



MIAMI (AP)—Dwyane Wade's jumper with 0.1 seconds left in overtime gave Miami a 93-91 overtime victory over the Indiana Pacers on Saturday night, extending the Heat home-court winning streak to 12 games.

Wade scored 28 points and LeBron James led two late comebacks by Miami, finishing with 27 for the Heat. James helped force regulation by hitting a game-tying 3-pointer with 10.2 seconds left in regulation, then not allowing Indiana's Darren Collison to get a potential game-winning shot off at the other end.

Danny Granger's runner with 2:01 left in the extra session gave Indiana a 91-86 lead. The Pacers didn't score again, getting outscored 7-0 the rest of the way.

Chris Bosh scored 13 for the Heat. Granger led the Pacers with 19 points.

Hornets 95, Timberwolves 89

In Minneapolis, Chris Kaman scored 20 points and New Orleans snapped a four-game losing streak by beating a Minnesota team that played its first game since losing star point guard Ricky Rubio for the season to a knee injury.

Jarrett Jack had 17 points and seven assists for the Hornets, who won for the 10th time all season thanks to 28 assists on 39 buckets.

Kevin Love had 31 points and 16 rebounds after missing the previous game with back spasms, but the Timberwolves couldn't shake the disappointment of losing Rubio in time to beat the Hornets.

Trail Blazers 110, Wizards 99

In Washington, LaMarcus Aldridge had 30 points and 10 rebounds to lead Portland.

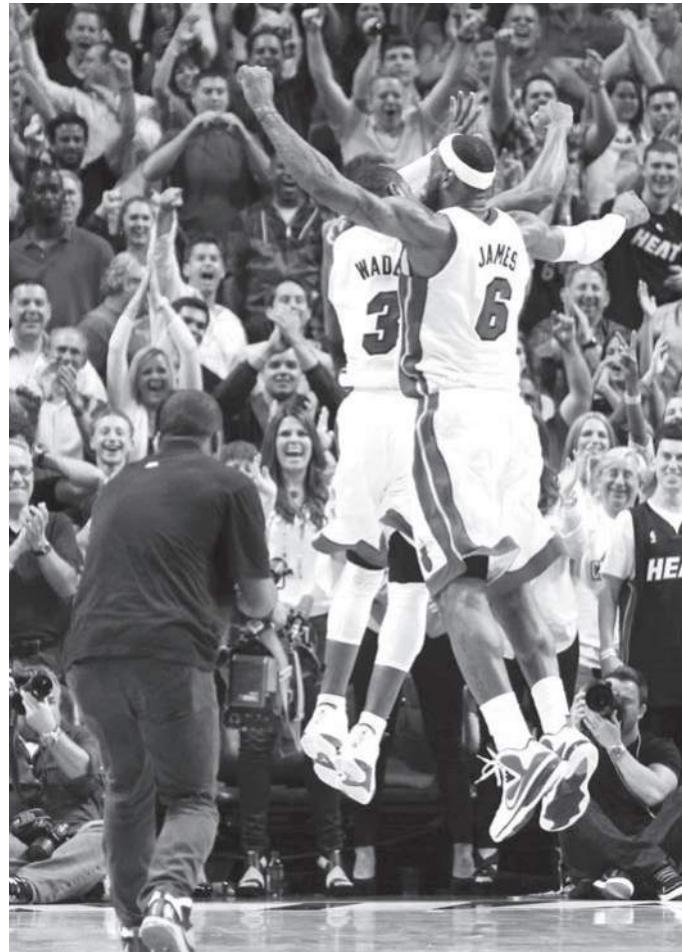
Aldridge was 12 for 15 from the floor and 6 for 6 from the free-throw line. He has scored more than 20 points in three straight games.

Jamal Crawford scored 23 off the bench and Raymond Felton added 21—10 in the fourth quarter—for the Trail Blazers, who snapped a four-game road losing streak.

John Wall had 25 points and eight assists, JaVale McGee scored 15 points and Chris Singleton added 12 for Washington. The Wizards were coming off a 106-101 win against the Los Angeles Lakers on Wednesday, but again failed to start a winning streak. Washington has only won back-to-back games once this season.

Pistons 105, Raptors 86
In Michigan, Rodney Stuckey had 20 points and eight assists and Brandon Knight scored 19 first-half points as Detroit routed Toronto.

The Pistons, who are now 11-6 since a 4-20 start, had six



AP
Miami Heat's Dwyane Wade (3) and LeBron James (6) celebrate after Wade hit the game-winning shot during overtime of an NBA basketball game against the Indiana Pacers in Miami, Saturday, March 10, 2012. The Heat won, 93-91.

players in double figures and shot over 50 percent for the second straight night.

Toronto, which beat Detroit by 20 in their first meeting this season, was led by DeMar DeRozan's 15 points, but only two others reached double figures.

Detroit led 61-37 at halftime and stretched the advantage to 31 points after three quarters.

Bulls 111, Jazz 97

In Chicago, Derrick Rose had 24 points and 13 assists, Carlos Boozer scored 27 and Chicago won for the ninth time in 10 games.

Kyle Korver scored a season-high 26 points or Chicago. The Bulls turned a seven-point halftime lead into a 16-point advantage going into the fourth quarter and came away

with a lopsided victory on a night when both teams were short-handed.

Bulls All-Star Luol Deng was out because of pain brought on by a torn ligament in his left wrist. Joakim Noah sat out with an illness, and guards Richard Hamilton (right shoulder injury) and C.J. Watson remained sidelined.

Thunder 122, Bobcats 95

In Oklahoma City, James Harden scored 22 of his career-high 33 points in the first half, Kevin Durant had 26 points and Russell Westbrook added 23 as Oklahoma City bounced back from a rare home loss.

The Thunder improved to 18-2 at home, rebounding from a disappointing 96-90 loss to visiting Cleveland on Friday night,

Marc Gasol had 21 points and Rudy Gay scored 19 on 7-for-20

in a game Oklahoma City coach Scott Brooks said his team didn't play up to expectations.

They started slow against the Bobcats and led 28-25 after one quarter before picking it up. The Thunder led by as much as 29 and the reserves got the bulk of the playing time in the fourth quarter.

D. J. Augustin scored 22 points for the Bobcats and Corey Maggette had 21.

Rockets 112, Nets 106

In New Jersey, Goran Dragic had 23 points and eight assists, Luis Scola scored a go-ahead tip-in with 62 seconds remaining and Houston snapped a five-game losing streak.

Courtney Lee scored 17 points, Chandler Parsons had 16 points and six assists and Chase Budinger and Samuel Dalembert added 15 points each to help Houston beat New Jersey for the 11th straight time since the 2005-06 season. Scola finished with 12 points for the Rockets.

Gerald Green had a career-high 26 points on 10-for-15 shooting in just his seventh game for the Nets since being signed from the NBA D-League, and MarShon Brooks added 23 points.

The Nets led 106-105 following Shelden Williams' layup with 2:07 remaining, but Scola tipped in a basket a minute later to give the Rockets the lead for good.

Suns 98, Grizzlies 91

In Phoenix, Jared Dudley scored 19 points to lead six Phoenix players in double figures and the Suns got their fifth straight home win.

Marcin Gortat added 15 points and nine rebounds for the Suns, Grant Hill had 14 points, Steve Nash and Robin Lopez scored 11 each, and Channing Frye had 10. Nash also had 15 assists. Phoenix's home winning streak is its longest since winning the final eight home games of the 2009-10 season.

Marc Gasol had 21 points and Rudy Gay scored 19 on 7-for-20

shooting for Memphis. The surprising Grizzlies, one of the top teams in the Western Conference, were 4-0 since the All-Star break and had won five straight overall.

Timberwolves' Rubio out for season with torn ACL

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—

Ricky Rubio's sensational rookie season has come to a devastatingly abrupt end.

The Minnesota Timberwolves point guard will miss the rest of the season with a torn ACL in his left knee, the team announced on Saturday. Now the upstart Wolves will have to keep chasing a playoff berth without the flashy, fiery leader of the franchise's resurgence.

"It's a big emotional shock," All-Star forward Kevin Love said. "He makes winning plays, he's a winner. We love having him around. On and off the court. We hope for a speedy recovery so he can help this team next year. It's a big loss for us."

It also means that Rubio will miss the upcoming Olympics, where he was expected to be a vital part of Spain's bid for the gold medal.

"All my support to my big friend and teammate (at)rickyrubio9," tweeted Toronto Raptors guard and fellow Spaniard Jose Calderon. "Hard news about his knee. He'll be back stronger."

Rubio went down in the closing seconds of a loss to the Los Angeles Lakers on Friday night, when his knee buckled as he tried to help out on defense against Kobe Bryant. An MRI on Saturday confirmed everyone's fears, and there plenty of long faces before the Wolves hosted the New Orleans Hornets.

"It's just too bad," coach Rick Adelman said. "He was having such a great year, he had such a great influence on our team and the way our team was playing and I think the

league. It's too bad any time you see a young player go down like that with an injury like that. You feel for him more than anyone else."

The first game without him wasn't a good sign. The Wolves committed 17 turnovers and lost 95-89 to the lowly Hornets (10-31).

A date for surgery has not yet been set, but team president David Kahn said he fully expected Rubio to be back for the start of next season.

"His work ethic knows no bounds," Kahn said. "If ever there was a player that was ticketed to have not just a full recovery but to come back better than ever, stronger, it's Ricky Rubio."

Rubio was not at Target Center on Saturday night, but tweeted several messages of thanks and encouragement for his teammates.

"Thank you everybody for ur support," Rubio tweeted. "I promise I will be back soon and stronger. There is only one way to take: move forward and stay positive."

In his first season after coming from Spain, the 21-year-old was averaging 10.6 points and 8.2 assists, but his impact has been so much greater than his numbers.

The floppy-haired, irrepressible young point guard changed the dynamic of a rebuilding team almost from the moment he set foot in Minnesota. His flashy, unselfish play galvanized his teammates, and his fun-loving nature has been an immediate draw at the box office, where the Timberwolves have already sold out seven games this season, their most since 2006-07.

Watson goes after his first world title

DORAL, Fla.

(AP)—Bubba Watson hit one shot over the green and off the tower. Another shot hit a fan in the gallery. As wild as it looked at time, he never lost control of his game and he never lost the lead Saturday in the Cadillac Championship.

Watson raced off to an eagle-birdie start, then survived a few errant shots coming home on the Blue Monster for a 5-under 67, giving him a three-shot lead and putting him on the verge of his first World Golf Championship.

"All in all, it was a great day," he said. His optimism was tempered not so much by the few guys chasing him, rather a golf course that for Watson remains

an acquired taste.

"The challenge is the Blue Monster," Watson said.

It was more of a pushover in moderate wind, with Rory McIlroy thinking about a 59 with six holes to play, Tiger Woods making an early charge up the leaderboard and a dozen players signing for a 67 or better.

Watson was at 17-under 199. He will play in the final group Sunday with PGA champion Keegan Bradley, who had a bogey-free 66 and was at 14-under 202. Justin Rose was tied for the lead through 11 holes until Watson found his groove and Rose made too many mistakes. Rose three-putted from long range on the 18th for a 69, leaving him tied with Bradley but no longer in the final group.

"Three back, it's a lot to Bubba on this golf course," Rose said. "But at least there's not a lot of guys ahead of you. There's only one guy at 17 under, and the rest of the pack is right there, so it doesn't take much."

Indeed, only one other player was within five shots of the lead. Peter Hanson of Sweden nearly holed a bunker shot on the 18th hole and shot 69, leaving him at 12-under 204.

Matt Kuchar (66) and Zach Johnson (67) were another shot behind. Adam Scott looked as though he might give Watson a run until the Australian started missing short putts, the pulled his tee shot into the water on the 18th and made double bogey. Scott dropped four shots over the last three holes.

McIlroy played the last six holes in 2 over and still shot 65, while Woods failed to do much after his birdie-birdie-birdie start. He twice made bogey on the par 5s and shot 68. They were eight shots behind.

The wind has been decreasing since the opening round, and so have the scores.

McIlroy hit two fluffy wedges at the start of his round, but he atoned for the second one by chipping in for birdie, and away he went. McIlroy shot 30 on the front nine without making birdie on the two par 5s, then made up for that with a fairway metal into about 18 feet for an eagle on No. 10. That put him 10 under for the tournament, only two off the lead.

Watson was still on the practice range, though, and this was a day when just about everyone went low.

Still, for a short time it looked as though McIlroy and Woods were going to resume their golf from last week at the Honda Classic. McIlroy was walked down the 12th fairway when he could hear a big cheer next to him as Woods, who opened with three straight birdies, made another one at No. 6. That put him at 9 under. Neither of them could keep it going the rest of the round.

McIlroy hit a good chip from short of the par-5 12th, with his right foot deep in the sand and his left foot on the hill, and converted that into a birdie that put him one shot behind. He was 9 under for the day through 12 holes, and the kid couldn't help but think of a 59.

"You're thinking four (birdies) of the last six and here we go," McIlroy said. "But obviously, it didn't happen like that."

Lopsided wins in Chamolinian softball league

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

CHAMOLINIAN SOFTBALL LEAGUE Four-run rule victories were recorded in last week's Chamolinian Softball Association's 2012 Budweiser Softball League games at the Capitol Hill Ballfield.

Last Wednesday, the G-Balllers rolled over X-clusive, 21-10, and Manelos thumped Managaha, 22-5, while runners-up Natibu pummeled the Warriors in last Friday's men's game, 17-6. In the women's division, defending champion Sakudi took the field and routed

Enamo Meta, 20-10. In other results in the men's division, Six Pack bested Talu Fahn, 10-5.

Natibu 17, Warriors 6

Natibu went to work early and jolted in front, 14-3. The first two runs came from errors and after a sacrifice fly by Ned Norita, Natibu set the stage for a grand slam by Bruce Norita

Oscar Secharmedal and Dustin Quitano had RBI singles and Ken Kalen brought them home with a home run. Jerome Delos Santos then snuck in a solo shot and crossed the plate off an error.

The Warriors held Natibu

for the next two innings and managed to sprinkle in a few runs here and there, but could not ignite a rally. Natibu added three runs in the bottom of the fourth before securing the run rule victory in the fifth inning.

Six Pack 10, Talu Fahn 5

After breaking the ice with a pair of runs in the opening frame, Six Pack moved ahead, 5-0, in the top of the fourth off a solo shot, an error, and a fielder's choice.

Talu Fahn rallied back in the bottom frame with four runs built from a RBI base hit by Rick Babauta and a three-run homer by Floyd Dela Cruz. But

Six Pack fired back with two more runs in the fifth inning off errors and a sacrifice fly.

G-Ballers 21, X-clusive 10

The G-Ballers held control, 11-6, after three innings and their top of the lineup gashed X-clusive with another nine runs in the top of the fourth inning.

Jason Manning cleared the bases with a three-RBI double, Asap D. smashed a 3-run homer and McQueen H. bagged an RBI single.

X-clusive only answered with three runs in the bottom frame and teams traded runs in the fifth inning. Talu Fahn's offense

ers apiece. Capalad led Andhok's with his 15 points.

QQ Rent A Car 58, Shirley's 57

In the first game, QQ Rent A Car gained its third win in six games after edging Shirley's Coffee Shop.

Eugene Mangali paced QQ with his 15 points and the team won the game behind its 3-point shooting. QQ converted eight triples, including the last one that Mangali drained, giving the squad enough cushion. Shirley's connected only one shot from downtown with Ben Petersberg hitting a triple in the first period.

The QQ-Shirley's match was a nip-and-tuck battle with the former having the edge in the end after limiting the latter to nine points in the fourth canto. Shirley's made only two field goals in the payoff period.

ed the second half with three long balls and Babauta came away with nine points as well in the third quarter to pad the lead.

Babauta ended the match with an impressive 36-point production, while Pettis also had an explosive game, adding 29. Pettis' 29-game output came less than 24 hours after he fired 37 markers in their two-point semis win over the favored Manta Rays.

THS 95 – Babauta 36, Pettis 29, Benghit 8, E. Borja 8, Maui 6, Cruz 5, I. Borja 4, Masga 2.

MHS 40 – Dela Rosa 13, Aguilera 6, Caro 5, Maranan 4, Palacios 3, Salas 2, Laesina 1, Suarez 1.

Scoring by quarters: 20-13, 52-19, 84-32, 95-40.

86th overall and first in the Challenged Athlete division with her time of 4:52:09.

In the men's division, Australian Ben Allen won over the returning Olivier Marceau of Switzerland, clocking in at 2:29:42 against the latter's 2:33:22. Six other pros were entered in the men's field. Allen (19:45 in swim and 1:29:38 in bike) and Marceau (21:05 in swim and 1:27:54 in bike) were neck and neck after the swim and bike legs, before Allen managed to take a crucial lead in the first climb in the run leg. The Australian timed in at 40:19 in the run race against Marceau's 44:23.

Former pro and inaugural XTERRA Saipan winner Jamie Whitmore also joined the race and the cancer survivor finished

dwindled in the late innings and was stuffed to just a run in its final stand. Six Pack went on to add three more runs to its lead in the top of the seventh frame.

Manelos 22, Managaha 5

The Manelos managed an early 7-0 lead in the first inning and never looked back.

Managaha mustered four runs in the bottom of the second, but never postured a comeback. Manelos then added five more runs in the fourth inning

off three hits.

WOMENS

Sakudi 20, Enamo Meta 10

Enamo Meta held tough against the defending champion early in the match and trailed by only one, 8-9, after its six-run burst in the top of the third inning built off two triples, a double, and a pair of base hits.

Sakudi then stepped up on offense and jumped in front, 17-10, in the next frame with seven hits.

pitch, and a sacrifice bunt by John Auther who brought home Ivan Seo.

The count then shifted to 5-4, in favor if IT&E, as both teams added a pair of runs in the second inning.

Each squad came up empty in the third inning before IT&E's Matt Kapileo bashed a triple in the fourth and later stole home to put his team ahead, 6-4.

IT&E added two more runs in the sixth inning from wild pitches and although McDonald's mounted a valiant comeback attempt it ended up stunned with the bases loaded after scoring two runs early in the frame.

Kapileo stepped to the rubber at the start of the third inning and gave up two earned runs in four innings off three hits and four walks with eight strikeouts.

JUNIOR LEAGUE

Enforcers 10, Red Sox 6

The Enforcers trudged ahead, 7-0, in the second inning of three hits and some errors. Cedric Camacho bagged an RBI single.

The count then shifted to, 8-1, after the third frame, as Red Sox's relief pitcher Jhace Palacios did a good job taming the Enforcers. However, the Enforcers sat on their lead and held strong defensively for the remainder of the contest.

Winning pitcher PJ Sablan allowed a pair of earned runs off five hits in four and two-thirds innings with five walks and eight strikeouts.

MAJOR LEAGUE

Twins 9, Little Legals 5

John Atalig started things off for the Twins with a leadoff solo homerun in the second inning and his team obliged shortly after by pulling ahead, 5-1, after three frames.

The Little Legals started the third inning with a run from a double by Quinton Deleon Guerrero, but the Twins' thick of the order shelled out three clutch hits in the bottom frame.

The Twins went on to add another run in the fourth inning and two more in the fifth, and held the Legals to just three runs in their final stand.

Atalig led the Twins from both sides of the plate. He pitched a complete game and gave up just two earned runs off four hits and five walks with 16 strikeouts through six innings and batted 2-for-2 with two RBIs, two runs, a base on balls, two stolen bases, and a hit-by-pitch.

IT&E 8, McDonald's 6

IT&E assumed control, 3-2, after the opening frame off of an RBI double by Alan Hinson, a wild

Smart Cagers snap skid, beat Andhok's

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

 The Smart Cagers are back on track after posting a 70-62 win over Andhok's Grille during a heated second game in the 2nd Domino Lux International Fraternity/Miller Lite Basketball Invitational Friendship League last Friday night at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

The Smart Cagers improved to a 2-3 record and ended their two-game losing skid, while Andhok's continued its see-saw performance in the 10-team league, sharing the former's mark.

Errol Peredo paced the Smart Cagers with his 20 points, nine of which came in the fourth quarter where he single-handed-

ly outgunned Andhok's to steal the win. Andhok's scored only seven markers in the final period, losing the lead it protected in the first three quarters.

Andhok's players also lost its cool in the remaining 4:23 of the fourth canto, leaving Smart Cagers' Edwin Santos with a cut of his left eyebrow. According to league officials, the incident started when Tim Wesley gave up a hard foul on Santos, who then had second motion after the tough plays. Then just when things were being settled, Andhok's John Artates and Mike Olaitiman stepped into the play with the former throwing a punch on Santos, who left the game bleeding.

Wesley was also thrown out of the match, while league officials are still weighing on sanctions

much about the other teams, none of them saw us coming either," Nabors said.

Tinian hit the ground running last Friday and crushed the Mount Carmel School Knights, 94-53. The Stallions then whipped Kagman High School Ayuyus in their second game of the day, 87-71.

Last Saturday morning, THS pulled off a 70-68 win over the Saipan Southern High School Manta Rays in upper bracket semifinals and saved plenty of gas in the tank to trot past a winded Dolphins crew in the finale.

The Dolphins also played last Friday and advanced past GCA in opening round, 83-56, before falling short in their first meeting with rival Southern, 58-70.

almost at the same time with the former timing in at 25:07 and the latter at 25:09.

Behind by about four minutes after the first leg of the race, Bucher grabbed the lead midway in the bike race and boosted her chances for her second XTERRA Guam win when Slack made a wrong turn along the bike course. According to the XTERRA World Tour website, Slack lost about 10 minutes due to her unfamiliarity with the course and ended up completing the leg in 1:53:53, way far behind Bucher's 1:31:43. Wasle moved up to second place going into the bike-run transition are

after logging 1:46:22 in the bike leg. Carey tallied 1:54:53 in the bike race.

Then in the run leg, Bucher kept pushing and posted the fastest time (50:35) among the four women's pros to complete the big win and make her the triathlete to beat in this weekend's XTERRA Philippines (March 17) and next week's XTERRA Saipan (March 24). Wasle submitted 50:55 in the run leg, while Slack and Carey recorded 51:45 and 55:03, respectively.

Former pro and inaugural XTERRA Saipan winner Jamie Whitmore also joined the race and the cancer survivor finished

TINIAN

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Benghit and Develle Maui, juniors Esteban Borja and Darrius Pettis, sophomore Marc Babauta, and freshmen Marvin Cruz, Henry Sandbergen, Ignacio Borja, and Chris Masga. Keith Nabors, Nathan Aquiningoc, and THS vice principal Eric San Nicolas coach the team.

"We put in a lot of hard work in preparing for this tournament. We practiced against anyone we could find on Tinian and came into this event thinking not so much about our competition, but our system and doing our best. Although we may not have known

RENATA

From Page 28

1.5K swim, 31K bike, and 8.2K run under three hours. The diminutive Austrian clocked in at 3:02:26, while XTERRA Guam first timer Jacqui Slack of United Kingdom submitted 3:07:10 to place third. Carey, who ruled last year's XTERRA Guam, fell to fourth with her 3:14:22.

Carey was the second woman out of the water, finishing the swim in the waters off Piti at 24:26, just less than three minutes behind Slack (21:32). Bucher and Wasle completed the swim race

Weekend Sports

Various competitions were held last week with the 7th Saipan Marathon the biggest of them all, drawing nearly 800 participants.

Saipan runner Mamiko Oshima-Berger led the winners in the annual event, reclaiming the women's marathon title she lost for two straight years (2010 and 2011). Beijing's Shuai Yang took the men's crown, while former Olympian Eric Wainaina Wahinya of Kenya ruled the ultra marathon (50K).

Noriko Jim clinched her

Saipan Marathon in spotlight

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

fourth straight 10K championship, while Charles Epperson won for the first time in the shortest race of the week. Saipan's Terra Allen and Japan's Shogo Tamura topped the half marathon.

Other notable events last week were the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization

Girls Volleyball League playoffs and the Marianas Kids Cup.

Saipan International School clinched the MISO girls volleyball crown after beating Grace Christian Academy in the finals, while ATAC and Ball Poppers ruled the U17 and U14 divisions of the Marianas Cup.

Also last week, on-going leagues continued their regular season games. In the DLX/Miller Lite caging, Island Apparel/Sunrisers, Blue Haus, Shirley's Coffee Shop, QQ Rent A Car, and Andhok's Grille posted separate wins. In the Saipan Little League, the Hustlers, Red Sox, Ol'Aces,

IT&E, Jets II, and Falcons downed their respective foes at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios and Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan ballfields. Over at the Capital Hill Ballfield, SaiPal and Familia split their games in the Chamolinian slow-pitch league.

At the Oleai Sports Complex

Field, Ehime University's senior strikers completed the visitors' three-game sweep after beating the CNMI Team. Ehime's junior squad earlier defeated the CNMI Team and a selection of Saipan players.

Still in football, the U15 girls and boys and U18 boys spring league opened with defending champions MP United Silver (U15) and MP United U18 winning their first game of the season. Other Week 1 winners were boys U15's Matansa and Paire, U18's Matansa, and girls U15's Matansa and Paire.



WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
IT&E Ol'Aces' Jimmy Kaipat waits for the pitch during their Majors division game against the Natibu Tanapag Falcons at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield last week.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Matansa's Sean Perez, left, dribbles against a MP United Blue defender during their game in the opening of the NMIFA U15 youth league last week at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Andhok's Grille's Gino Libuw pulls up for a running jumper against SCS defenders during their game in the DLX/Miller Lite caging at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Mamiko Oshima-Berger is all smiles after receiving her first place plaque during the awards ceremony for the 7th Saipan Marathon at the beach front of Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Participants in the 7th Saipan Marathon head out to the course.



WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
Kil and ATAC players in action during the U17 finale of Marianas Kids Cup.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
A photographer from a Korean magazine takes picture of young runners at the starting line of the 7th Saipan Marathon.



Activity Schedule for March 12, 2012

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM: | Morning practices |
| 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM: | Evening practices |

There are no scheduled games.

Gillette MULTIPURPOSE GYMNASIUM

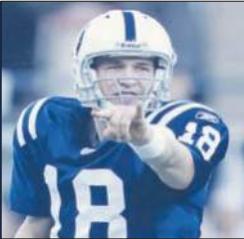
NMBA NORTHERN MARIANAS BADMINTON ASSOCIATION

SAIPAN SOCCER SCHOOL

There are no scheduled games.

Manning
watch moves
to desert, but
no sign of QB

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Saipan Tribune Sports



Wade beats
buzzer, lifts
Heat past
Pacers

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28 MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2012

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Tinian High seizes MISO caging crown



WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

The Tinian High School Stallions pose with the MISO boys basketball championship trophy after defeating Marianas High School, 95-40, in the finals last Saturday at the MHS Gymnasium.

Renata draws first blood, wins XTERRA Guam

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Look out. Renata Bucher is back.

After a disappointing performance in the 2011 XTERRA Saipan and missing the Guam trip last year, the Swiss triathlete made her presence felt early in the series of races this month, winning the 2012 XTERRA Guam Championship last Saturday.

The 34-year-old Luzern native timed in at 2:47:25 in the first part of XTERRA Asia Tour's "Triple Crown" to beat four other pros, including Saipan's own Mieko Carey (fourth). Bucher, who slid to third place behind U.S. pro Shonny Vanlandingham and Austria's Carina Wasle in XTERRA Saipan last year, had an impressive 15-minute lead over Wasle in last Saturday's race and was the lone female to complete the

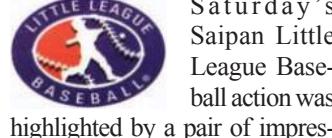
See RENATA on Page 26



Bucher

Atalig homers in Twins win; Nakamura leads Ol'Aces

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
walter_sutherland@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Saturday's Saipan Little League Baseball action was highlighted by a pair of impres-



WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
The As Matuis Twins' John Atalig waits for the pitch during their Major division game against the Robert T. Torres Kagman Little Legals last Saturday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

sive home runs from Major division's John Atalig of the As Matuis Twins and Big League's Harry Nakamura of the defending champion Docomo Pacific Ol'Aces.

Atalig and the Twins held off a late rally by the Robert T. Tor-

res Law Offices' Kagman Little Legals for a 9-5 win last Saturday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield, while Nakamura's blast marked the icing on the cake in the Ol'Aces' 14-5 rout of the St. Michael's Medical

See ATALIG on Page 26